

Global Arms Control and Disarmament: *Cloudy Prospects?*

Where are arms control and disarmament headed? Previously, arms control successfully helped regulate the superpowers' strategic nuclear forces, and promoted stable conventional force levels in Europe. In the future, emphasis likely will shift toward slowing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Thus, arms control is in transition.

The arms control and disarmament process is best seen as a major aspect of the shaping function in U.S. national security strategy, one that can reduce adversary threats. Today, potential opponents of the United States are likely to attempt an asymmetric strategy to counter America's superior power projection capability. Such a strategy could include nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons delivered by long-range missiles. A major objective of any U.S. arms control and disarmament strategy is to frustrate, if not block, this development. It also seeks to secure a more favorable geostrategic environment for the United States and the international community.

Over the last 5 years, the arms control and disarmament agenda has included:

- Reducing and stabilizing U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals
- Maintaining and expanding nonproliferation regimes that restrain the testing and spread of nuclear weapons
- Constraining the spread of long-range ballistic and cruise missiles
- Banning chemical and biological weapons
- Restricting the size and composition of conventional arms in the context of regional restraint regimes
- Creating regional confidence-building and crisis-management measures
- Banning certain classes of nonnuclear arms, e.g., land mines.

In most cases, arms control and disarmament talks have been conducted as formal bilateral and multilateral arms negotiations. These negotiations are protracted and produce highly structured agreements, such as START I and II and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). More recently, interest has been renewed in more informal bilateral and multilateral arms restraint and disarmament regimes. Most noteworthy was the 1991 Bush-Gorbachev initiative to reduce and consolidate the U.S. and Soviet tactical/theater nuclear arsenals without a formal agreement. Recently, the nongovernmental organization (NGO) has become an arms control and disarmament actor. A variety of activist NGOs and lesser powers collaborated to affect the negotiation and global ratification of a ban on land mines.



AP/Wide World Photos

Iraqi al-Hussein Scud missile to be destroyed by United Nations inspectors in Iraq

From the perspective of the Cold War, progress in arms control and disarmament has been spectacular and rapid. Immediately after the Soviet Union's collapse in December 1991, major advances in arms control and disarmament were achieved for both nuclear and conventional forces. START I and II nuclear reduction agreements were signed between the United States and Russia in 1992 and 1993. Ratification of the massive, multilateral Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) agreement in 1993 also advanced European regional security. These successes led to international euphoria in the mid-1990s that rapid and far-reaching arms control and disarmament progress was both feasible and desirable. Hopes were heightened further in 1995 with the renewal of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and major progress in the negotiations of a CWC and a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

During 1998, the arms control and disarmament process suffered several setbacks. Further, the domestic political importance of any arms control and disarmament agreement has steadily faded since the Cold War's end. Much of the electorate in the United States and other industrial democracies has become preoccupied with major domestic social and economic issues. This setting will influence how the future unfolds.

Key Trends

While the immediate post-Cold War period, 1992–97, was marked with considerable success, more recent events suggest cloudy prospects ahead.

Stalled U.S.-Russia Nuclear Negotiations

Building on the momentum of the 1987 Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and the 1991 Bush-Gorbachev mutual reduction agreements, the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) was signed by 1992. Rapid progress occurred in START II, which was signed by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin in 1993. Both the U.S. Congress and Russian Duma ratified START I in 1994. The U.S. Senate ratified START II in 1995.

Considerable progress was also made in a new post-Cold War issue, the Russification of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. After prodding from Congress, the Bush administration launched the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) effort that was followed by the Nunn-Lugar Act of 1993. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations successfully negotiated with the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union that possessed portions of the Soviet arsenal—Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. All three nations believed that their long-term security interests would be served by giving up the Soviet nuclear legacy. In 1994, the final process of Russification occurred after Ukraine agreed to give up its nuclear arsenal and missile capabilities.

However, further progress in START has stalled. The Russian Duma has refused to ratify START II. Several factors have had an impact. First is the disastrous collapse of the Russian economy and concomitant deterioration of the Russian armed forces. Second, the Russian national security and political elites perceive that Russia has suffered several disastrous strategic reversals, such as NATO expansion eastward. Third is the belief that the United States is the “sole surviving superpower” and has to be countered. This latter view within Russian publics and elites has greatly strengthened and broadened after the United States and the United Kingdom conducted Operation *Desert Fox* against Iraq during December 1998 and NATO launched Operation *Allied Force* against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia during spring 1999. Essentially, the Russian elite's focus has shifted away from building a strong strategic partnership with the United

States toward a more interest-based policy that emphasizes Russia's nuclear strength.

Russian opponents of START II ratification make the following arguments:

- The Russian armed forces have suffered a catastrophic quantitative and qualitative drop in capability, as dramatized by their poor showing in the war with Chechnya.
- Simultaneously, the Russian economy has not become a competitive capitalist economy and remains in crisis after the August 1998 default. The Russian Government's inability to collect taxes has led to a fiscal starvation diet for the armed forces, precluding its transition to a smaller, more professional, and high-technology force. The failure to modernize the Russian military establishment has been highlighted by the heavy use of high-technology air power by NATO against Yugoslavia.
- Russia has suffered several strategic reversals and is without major allies. This belief has been heightened by the eastward expansion of NATO.
- As a "great power," Russia has only one asset to rely upon until its economy and armed forces recover—nuclear weapons.
- Dismantling and converting multiple warhead ICBMs to single warhead ICBMs is very expensive.
- Russia must maintain a large operational nuclear arsenal to compensate for weak conventional forces and to ensure that it can deal with any possible U.S. deployment of a robust national missile defense (NMD).

In an effort to accommodate Russia, the Clinton administration agreed to change the date for dismantlement of its multiple warhead ICBMs, from 2003 to 2007; this would ameliorate the high costs associated with dismantling this force and replacing it with single-warhead ICBMs. Further, the administration agreed to move to a lower weapons level in a START III agreement, which would be 2,000 to 2,500 strategic nuclear warheads.

Nuclear issues have changed. An example of how they have changed is the U.S. strategy to find a response to the possible failure of the NPT, an effort that created tensions between the United States and Russia. A central feature of the U.S. counterproliferation strategy is the deployment of very robust theater missile defenses (TMD), which are designed to intercept long-range theater ballistic missiles. The Russians are concerned that this program would lead to the U.S. deployment of a strategic antiballistic missile (ABM) system as part of a NMD. Further, the Russian Government is concerned that testing of a high-performance TMD would directly violate the terms of the ABM Treaty. This was one of the arguments used by opponents of START II in the Russian Duma, which was not ratified as of mid-1999.

To deal with these concerns, the Clinton administration successfully negotiated an agreement with the Russian Government at Helsinki in 1997. It allows the United States to test a wide range of high-performance TMDs while staying within the newly agreed definition of "demarcation" between theater missile and strategic ABM defense.

However, this agreement did not break the logjam in the Russian Duma. Essentially, U.S. policy has become hostage to President Yeltsin's rapid demise as a powerful political force. America has had to deal with three new Russia governments during 1998. In 1999, however, the Cologne Summit opened the prospect for renewed negotiations on both offensive and defensive strategic systems.

A more positive development has been the continued progress in CTR programs. In the 1998 budget agreement, Congress provided substantial funding for continued U.S. purchases of surplus, weapons-grade, highly enriched uranium and negotiations for similar purchases of weapons-grade plutonium.

China as a Factor in the Negotiating Process

Another factor is influencing U.S. negotiations over the fate of the ABM Treaty with Russia. Beijing has expressed sharp opposition to any U.S. collaboration with Japan in developing a high-performance TMD. The Chinese Government argues that such missile defenses will "destabilize the regional military balance." Further, the Chinese have expressed vigorous opposition to the United States providing Taiwan with any TMD, even lower performance systems such as the Patriot Advanced Capability III interceptor. Although the Chinese nuclear arsenal is modest by U.S. and Russian standards, this could change in the future, if China deploys large numbers of its next generation of long-range missiles. The May 1999 Cox Commission report indicated that China may have gained significant nuclear advantages through espionage.

Dealing with nuclear-armed third parties will loom large in the next century. This especially will be the case if America hopes to move the START bilateral process into multilateral negotiations. Such third parties may not prevent deeper cuts, even below START III levels, but they likely will complicate the process and constrain agreements in ballistic missile defense.

Halting the Spread of WMD

Containing, if not reversing, nuclear weapons proliferation is becoming important in the arms control and disarmament agenda. Banning the production of chemical and biological weapons is also important. The nuclear nonproliferation effort has been a major element of U.S. national security strategy since the mid-1960s. It was enshrined in the 1968 NPT, which recognized the existence of only five nuclear weapon states: these are the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom. These became known as the P-5. In recent years, the Bush and Clinton administrations also have made nuclear nonproliferation a national security priority.

By the mid-1990s, the prospects for nuclear nonproliferation improved significantly and appeared headed in a favorable direction. Progress included:

- The forceful dismantlement of the Iraqi nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons program following Baghdad's defeat in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. The United States led an international coalition and sustained consensus within the UN Security Council to ensure that Iraq was placed under a constraining peace agreement enforced by economic embargo.
- Successful rollback of South Africa's nuclear weapons program following the end of the apartheid government in 1994.
- Brazil and Argentina's renunciation of their nuclear weapons programs in 1994.
- Indefinite extension of an unchanged NPT in 1995.
- Withdrawal of nuclear arsenals and associated long-range missiles from Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan to Russia by 1996 (see above).
- The apparent freezing of the North Korean nuclear weapons program in 1994 through the Framework Agreement. The United States, South Korea, and Japan agreed to provide alternative sources of energy to include shipments of fuel oil and construction of two, large, light-water nuclear reactors.
- Signing of the CTBT by the permanent members of the UN Security Council in 1996.

This success was further reinforced by a robust series of agreements, such as the London Suppliers Group and Zanger Accord. These placed restrictions on the diffusion of dual-use nuclear technology.

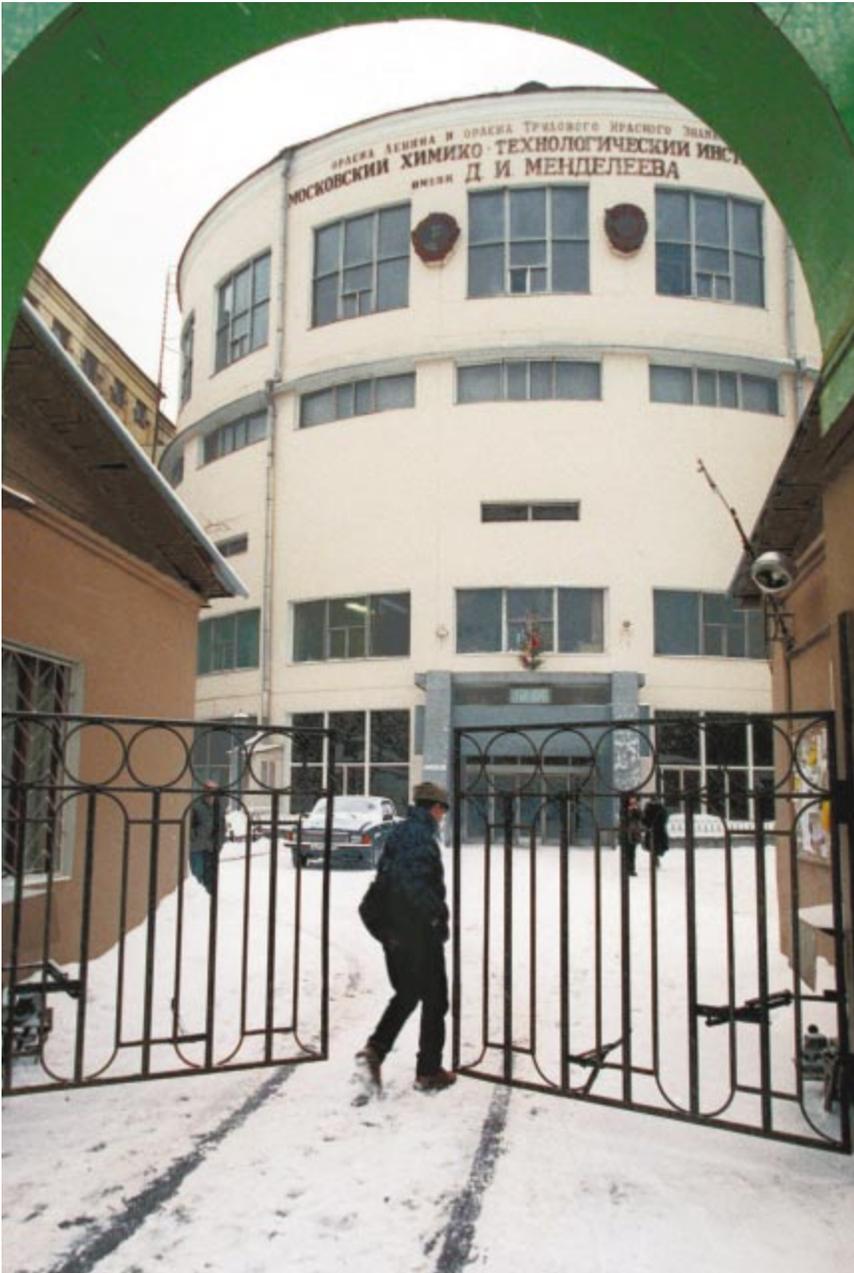
More recent events have cast doubts on the NPT regime's sustainability. On May 11 and 13, 1998, India conducted underground nuclear tests. Two weeks later, Pakistan conducted its own underground nuclear tests. Although the

number and characteristics of both test series were subject to question, both states broke the nuclear weapon threshold. For more than two decades, India and Pakistan maintained "virtual nuclear arsenals" without overt testing and deployment. That bilateral self-restraint collapsed once the Indian Hindu Nationalist Party's coalition government advocated ending "nuclear apartheid" and overtly tested an operational nuclear arsenal. Given India's substantial regional military superiority, the Pakistani Government decided to test in order to provide Pakistan with a "great equalizer."

American response to these tests was firm and included near-automatic economic sanctions imposed by nonproliferation legislation. The Clinton administration hoped that the international community would express outrage over the Indian and Pakistani tests, but the response was mixed. Although the P-5 and G-7 have been willing to express strong opposition, several major states have refused to impose economic sanctions. These include Russia, the United Kingdom, and France. Russia continues to expand its military sales with India, including the proposed sale of two large nuclear power reactors. Russian aerospace and nuclear sectors are desperate for income. This has clearly taken precedence over Russia's longer term strategic objective of preventing the rise of nuclear weapon states on its periphery. Whether nuclear proliferation can be constrained in South Asia or elsewhere is uncertain.

"Agreed Framework" with North Korea

The United States nuclear nonproliferation strategy was further strained in the fall of 1998. U.S. intelligence detected construction of a large underground facility north of the Yongbyon nuclear research center in North Korea. Both the United States and South Korea are concerned that North Korea may be constructing a fissile material production facility at this site, and thus reneging on the Agreed Framework. The United States conducted an inspection of this facility in May 1999, but concerns persist that other underground sites may exist. In addition, North Korea's testing of a missile over Japan suggests efforts to acquire delivery systems for WMD.



AP/Wide World Photos

The Mendelavev Chemical Technical University in Moscow, subject of U.S. sanctions after alleged failure to prevent leaks of nuclear and missile technology to Iran

Global Ratification of the CTBT

The fate of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is closely tied to the outcome of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests. In 1997, the P-5 signed the CTBT. Even then India expressed its strong opposition to signing the agreement. As written, all potential nuclear-armed states, including India, must ratify the CTBT before it comes into force. A critical issue is whether America can convince India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT. India demands that it be

formally declared a nuclear-weapon state, which is not possible under the current NPT terms. In the United States, strong opposition to ratification has been expressed in the Senate. The ultimate CTBT fate remains uncertain and subject to political debate in several quarters.

Spread of Long-Range Missile Technology

Long-range ballistic missiles are the preferred means of delivering WMD. By the early 1980s, the United States negotiated with its allies the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). After the Cold War, America convinced Russia and Ukraine to join the MTCR; China also agreed to adhere to its provisions. Essentially, the MTCR attempts to restrict the diffusion of ballistic missiles with ranges greater than 300 kilometers and payloads of 500 kilograms. The United States has led the effort to include long-range cruise missiles as part of the MTCR protocols.

However, 1998 was a bad year for the MTCR. Several events signaled this regime's inability to limit the spread of long-range ballistic and cruise missiles:

- In April, Pakistan tested the Ghauri medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) to range of 1,500 kilometers. This missile is believed to be a clone of the North Korean No Dong.

- In May, India announced that it deployed its Prithvi short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) and would develop the Agni II intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM). The latter had its first test flight during April 1999 which prompted a second Pakistani test of the Ghauri MRBM and the first test of the Shaheen SRBM.

- In July, Iran attempted a full range test of a similar MRBM. Although it failed, this missile confirmed long-suspected missile technology transfers between Iran and North Korea.

- In August, North Korea launched a three-stage missile over northern Japan in a failed attempt to orbit a satellite. This test alarmed the Japanese Government, and revealed that North Korea had mastered a multi-stage missile technology. This could allow North Korea to develop an IRBM with a range of several thousand kilometers. It is presumed that Pakistan, Iran, and others will be able to acquire this class of ballistic missile.

- Evidence indicated that Russian missile expertise and technology were spreading to such clients as Iraq and Iran.

These events gave credence to the findings of a bipartisan study, headed by former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld that missile developers might make substantial progress before being detected by U.S. intelligence. The United States has successfully gained Russian, Chinese, and Ukrainian

cooperation on limiting the spread of their missile technology. But the events in 1998 reveal MTCR limits regarding a dedicated proliferator, such as North Korea. Pyongyang has stated in negotiations with Washington that it is generating more than \$500 million annually in revenue from missiles and related technology exports.

Even if the United States can constrain North Korea, No Dong class missile technology may have already been transferred to Pakistan and Iran. Further evidence suggests that similar missile sales and technology transfers are underway with Syria, Egypt, and Libya. These states could have an MRBM-class missile operational within a few years. Less certain is whether they will acquire multistage missiles in operational numbers. Beyond the No Dong class liquid-fueled missiles, several countries may acquire long-range solid propellant missiles. Reportedly, Pakistan already has the Chinese-developed M-9 and M-11 class SRBMs. Similar programs are underway in Iran and Syria.

The diffusion of missile technology is indicative of the "asymmetric threat" that might be employed by a regional state in conflict with the America. Although cruise missile technology is covered by the MTCR, the United States is finding it difficult to thwart the spread of that technology. The United States has repeatedly demonstrated the usefulness of long-range cruise missiles, and a number of states are actively selling systems and technology. Recently, the United States and the United Kingdom have disputed this issue. The United Kingdom seeks to sell a variant of its air-launched Storm Shadow cruise missile to the United Arab Republic. The spread of antiship missiles and long-range unmanned air vehicles has further blurred cruise missile technology distinctions. Both can be converted to ground attack, especially with widespread and low-cost access to the Global Positioning System, which can provide accurate guidance.

Enforcing the Chemical Weapons Convention

The ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) parallels the nuclear non-proliferation effort. This treaty calls for banning all chemical weapons. It establishes an unprecedented degree of onsite inspection, especially for the signatories' chemical industries. However, the challenge to this ambitious agreement is dual technologies—those that have peaceful as well as military applications.

After stiff debate, the U.S. Senate ratified the CWC in 1997. Only at the eleventh hour was enabling legislation passed during the fall of 1998. All major powers have signed and ratified the CWC, which became international law in the fall of 1997. Iran, Egypt, and other greater Middle East states have refused to ratify the CWC until the issue of Israel's clandestine nuclear weapon program is resolved.

More worrisome has been the appearance of "sanction fatigue" within the UN Security Council. Iraq has failed to comply with the UN inspection regime, which was to ensure the complete dismantlement of Iraq's WMD arsenal. During the winter of 1998, the United States and Great Britain failed to gain P-5 consensus regarding the use of force against Iraq. As a result, Washington has had to resort to UN economic sanctions to encourage the reintroduction of UN inspection of suspected Iraqi chemical and biological weapons facilities.

The Iraqi regime is playing a cat and mouse game. Saddam Hussein is counting on Russia, France, and China to diminish their support for the punitive peace agreement imposed by the United Nations after the Persian Gulf War. Another round of this "game" occurred during November 1998. The United States and the United Kingdom threatened to launch massive air and missile strikes against Iraq. This seemingly compelled Iraq to accept UN inspectors again. When Iraq subsequently failed to comply, America and Britain launched bombing attacks in late December 1998. In the aftermath, Iraq refused to let the UN Special Commission inspectors return. The future is uncertain.

Although less dramatic, the U.S. economic and technological sanctions on Iran have been eroding under pressure of European and U.S. petroleum industry interests. The United States is finding that while the international community favors nonproliferation, powerful countervailing economic incentives undermine enforcement.

BWC and Dual-Purpose Technology

The Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BWC), ratified by the major powers in 1972, is an example of how difficult it is to limit dual-purpose technologies. Unlike the CWC, the BWC has no rigorous onsite inspection procedures. Similar to chemical weapons technologies, the biological weapons are produced using dual-purpose technologies. However, biological weapons can be more readily developed. They also can be

U.S. soldier checking M-90 chemical detection unit during Exercise Foal Eagle 98



far more potent. The Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth) terrorist organization developed and attempted to deploy both BW and CW in 1995. Fortunately, they proved to be technically and operationally incompetent.

Over the years, the United States has hoped that the horrific and potentially uncontrollable nature of biological warfare would reinforce the norm against it. U.S. policy planners have become concerned that potential enemies of the United States may view biological weapons as an ideal asymmetric weapon.

High-level defectors have revealed that the Soviet Union grossly violated the BWC with an ambitious BW program in the mid-1980s. Some sources suggested that this was a planned asymmetric response to the U.S. threat to deploy the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). Evidence also indicates that this program did not fully shut down until the late-1990s. Similar to the nuclear and missile communities, a large cadre of former Soviet biological weapons personnel is looking for employment. They are likely to be in high demand, because they possess expertise in a new generation of biological weapons, including pathogens altered by genetic manipulation.

As a result of the difficulty of limiting chemical and biological weapons, the U.S. Government seeks the development of a more effective homeland defense capability. This effort ranges

from a major reorganization of the federal defense and response system to the creation of response units within the National Guard.

Regional Arms Control and Disarmament

The Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty of 1993 further encouraged post-Cold War euphoria. It dramatically reduced the size of conventional forces in Europe and the NIS. It also set limits on these forces. The success of CFE contrasts with the protracted and unsuccessful negotiations during the Mutual Balanced Force Reduction era.

By spring 1999, the terms of the CFE treaty were modified to accommodate Russian concerns regarding their deployment of forces into the Caucasus. Ratification of these changes is scheduled for the fall of 1999. The CFE prompted one of the largest meltdowns ever of armored fighting vehicles. However, all parties were permitted to transfer older equipment to less well-equipped allies to stay within national limits.

Complementing the CFE was an Open Skies Agreement that allowed for regular reconnaissance by designated aircraft of the major parties. This includes reconnaissance by Russian aircraft over Canada and the United States, a reflection of the profound strategic change that followed the Soviet Union's collapse.

Regional Confidence-Building Measures

The CFE process has functioned rather smoothly. No member has the financial resources, much less the strategic inclination, to upset that agreement. Similar disarmament and restraint regimes have been informally discussed for the Middle East, South Asia, and the Korean peninsula. However, they have not moved into the more formal state-to-state negotiating process.

Other attempts at developing similar regional confidence-building measures have either been stillborn or unsuccessful. Hopes that the Framework Agreement would “put the North Korea nuclear weapon genie back in the bottle” have proven premature. The intermittent Four Power talks have not seriously addressed confidence-building or regional arms control measures. Future negotiations between India and Pakistan appear possible, but that bilateral process is likely to be protracted. In the Greater Middle East, any plausible confidence-building and/or regional arms control agenda awaits the outcome of the protracted Israeli and Palestinian negotiations.

A search for landmines placed by Tamil rebels near Mankulam, Sri Lanka



AP/Wide World Photos

Nongovernmental Organizations

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have grown in prominence in the international arms control and disarmament process. This is largely attributable to the Cold War's end and the expansion of international multimedia, especially the Internet and World Wide Web. A variety of international groups has lobbied for radical reduction if not abolition of nuclear weapons. Radical nuclear weapon limits leading to outright abolition once were dismissed as a fringe idea. Today, the concept has gained considerable support. This has led to activist efforts to persuade the International Court of Justice to declare nuclear weapons as internationally illegal in war. However, no well-organized NGO effort has developed to pursue grass roots support for nuclear abolition.

The International Committee to Ban Land Mines has proven to be a successful NGO in developing a focused disarmament agenda. This coalition of NGOs and such countries as Canada and Norway helped negotiate the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and Their Destruction. Reflecting its military commitment to South Korea, the United States resisted this effort, to the dismay of the international activists. At present, some 70 states have ratified the landmine ban, which gives it the force of international law. Aside from the United States, several other major military powers, such as China, have refused to sign the agreement.

Although not an arms control and disarmament issue in the strict sense, America suffered a similar outcome in negotiating the creation of an International Criminal Court (ICC). Initially, the United States thought that creation of this court would be a useful institutionalization of the Hague Tribunal war crimes court process. However, various opponents of U.S. global power projection were able to gain provisions the U.S. military found objectionable. In the end, the United States was unable to support the ICC proposal.

Arms Control and Disarmament: A Strategic Paradox

Recent arms control and disarmament efforts have been frustrating. Just as progress seems to be made, the process suffers setbacks. Yet, unmitigated pessimism is not warranted. So far, the arms control and disarmament process

Anti-Personnel Landmine Treaty



Source: *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1999, A15.

has served U.S. interests. The issue is whether this process can deal with the challenges ahead.

Much will depend on how the future unfolds. American interests in preventing further WMD proliferation are shared by many other countries, including the core democracies. The United States and its partners doubtless will continue exerting strong efforts in this endeavor. The best case outcome would be keeping proliferation to a minimum. A worst case would be a collapse of arms control and disarmament, with accelerating proliferation in several regions. The consequences for U.S. interests would be grave. In between lies a more probable scenario: arms control efforts will continue succeeding in important ways, yet proliferation will occur in selected places. This middle-ground scenario would affect U.S. interests in mixed but dangerous ways.

The United States and the arms control process face a strategic paradox. On the one hand, U.S. power is second to none. It has the opportunity to shape the future international security environment. Through arms control and disarmament it can reduce the threats to international security. It also can help extend deterrence and stability to its allies and friends throughout the world.

On the other hand, the United States will have a difficult time mobilizing global consensus

for new arms control accords. Much of the world is suspicious, if not resentful, of American political, military, technological, and economic dominance. This is especially true of the three key transition states, Russia, China, and India. The attitude of the Russian elite toward the United States has changed, as is demonstrated by the Russian Duma's failure to ratify START II. Although U.S. and Chinese relations have seemingly improved because of the administration's successful engagement strategy, a potential for strategic rivalry exists, as evidenced by Beijing's national security strategy. India has forcefully declared that the United States should accept a new "multipolar era."

The United States has an interest in seeking additional agreements, but would likely encounter strong obstacles. The START process is running up against imposing political barriers. Efforts to expand the NPT, the CWC, and the BWC are contrasted by growing proliferation challenges. The CFE process in Europe is unlikely to be expanded further, and serious interest in conventional accords elsewhere is not apparent. These constraints do not prohibit further progress, but they will make it hard to achieve.

Arms control is best able to serve U.S. interests in Europe and Eurasia, regions that are not currently focal points of intense interstate conflict. The opposite is the case across the Greater

Middle East and South Asia. However, its need is the greatest there. To the extent arms control efforts fail in these regions, U.S. strategic interests will be damaged.



AP/Wide World Photos

An Israeli citizen with a gas mask, distributed in Jerusalem in December 1998 in anticipation of a possible attack by Iraq

Consequences for U.S. Policy

Arms control and disarmament will remain a key feature of U.S. national strategy, but their requirements are changing. The recent slowdown in progress underscores the need to examine U.S. policies. A key question is: given the opportunities and constraints, what priorities should U.S. policy pursue in the coming years? How America answers this question will determine the future role of arms control and disarmament in its national security strategy. This especially is the case regarding efforts to restrain accelerating proliferation.

Re-thinking START Negotiations

The START era may be ending in a formal sense. Similar to parallel reductions pioneered by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in 1991, the United States may be compelled to accept a more informal relationship with Russia.

The Russian Duma may not ratify START II before the next Russian presidential election in 2000, if ever. Twice during December 1998 and March 1999, the Duma appeared ready to consider a ratification process only to have the prospect terminated by U.S. and NATO air campaigns, *Operations Desert Fox* and *Allied Force*. Hope for jump-starting START III via the 1997 Helsinki Agreement has faded. As a result, America faces the prospect of maintaining nuclear forces at START I levels at a 5-year cost of some \$10 billion. In turn, the "deterioration rate" of the Russian liquid propellant ICBM and SLBM force continues apace. Lack of funding is compelling the Russian military to dismantle much of the ICBM and SLBM force ahead of the START II schedule. Russian strategic weapon planners extensively discuss the possibility of Russia unilaterally moving to an operational force of no more than 1,000 long-range weapons.

If Russia does not adopt START II, one option for the United States would be to unilaterally move to START II levels or below. This step would help signal the Russian elite that America has no interest in maintaining a numerically superior strategic nuclear force. The Russian military is in no position to maintain the current START I structure, much less consider rebuilding its force during the next decade.

If START does not achieve results, the focus of the United States could shift to the maintenance of the CTR process, especially the purchase of highly enriched uranium and weapons-grade plutonium. Its strongest leverage may be Russia's need for foreign exchange. An agreement for further Russian fissile material sales along these lines was signed even during the NATO air campaign against Yugoslavia in spring 1999.

Conducting ABM and TMD Negotiations

Where is the ABM Treaty headed? A central issue is whether the United States should deploy a robust national missile defense during the first decade of the 21st century. Already this issue is polarized politically. Also, the emphasis on homeland defense against unconventional chemical and biological weapons threats is likely to increase. The diffusion of long-range ballistic missiles by North Korea will accelerate the requirement to deploy a robust theater missile defense, if only to protect U.S. forces and those of its allies. All these factors point to a major debate about theater and national missile defenses in the coming years.

Without the demarcation between strategic ABM defense and TMD as negotiated in the 1997 Helsinki Summit, the United States may have to circumscribe the ABM Treaty in order to deploy TMD. During winter 1999, the administration strongly signaled that it was prepared to consider deploying a national missile defense by 2005 that might call for the renegotiation of the ABM Treaty. Abrogation could only be justified if North Korea or Iran appeared to be rapidly acquiring an intercontinental nuclear missile capability. Beijing's reaction must also be considered. Although China's nuclear missile potential is dismissed by some, its capacity to respond with ICBMs will improve dramatically if its DF-41 program proves successful. This will further intensify pressure for a ballistic missile defense capability within the Western Alliance.

Shoring Up the NPT and CTBT

A principal challenge to shoring up the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will be if rogues like North Korea, Iraq, and Iran accelerate efforts to acquire nuclear weapons and delivery systems. Until then, efforts to contain and deter them will continue, supplemented by actions to prevent their access to these assets. But if they actually cross the nuclear threshold, a new era of regional security affairs and arms control negotiations will emerge. Initially, the challenge will be to deal with adversaries in a manner that contains destabilization.

In South Asia, Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests have shattered the status quo established by the NPT. Roll-back is not an option. Now the United States must consider how to shore up the NPT after these two acts of nuclear breakout, with the prospect of more to follow. Two options are:

- *Freeze.* Convince India and Pakistan not to move to an operational arsenal through a combination of incentives and disincentives. Encourage both to accept the CTBT while continuing to maintain "virtual," not operational, nuclear arsenals. The prospect of this option may have been fatally compromised by the spring 1999 long-range missile tests by both India and Pakistan.

- *Fire Break.* Develop a mutual deterrence regime between both nuclear weapon states. Limit deployment to small and secure nuclear arsenals. The United States might play a major role

in developing and monitoring regional confidence-building measures. Also, attempts should be made to prevent the Pakistani bomb from becoming an Islamic bomb. Encourage both countries to ratify the CTBT and then lift economic sanctions. The question is whether India and Pakistan should be grandfathered into the NPT.

Some advocate punishing India and Pakistan. The danger of punitive action or neglect is that continued economic sanctions will disproportionately affect Pakistan, which has a far weaker economy than India. Out of desperation, the government might consider selling nuclear weapons to its Islamic neighbors. Economic sanctions also could lead to Pakistan's collapse. If so, there would be the real possibility that several nuclear weapons might fall into the hands of terrorist groups, including those associated with Osama bin Laden.

By the end of 1998, the United States acknowledged the counterproductive nature of economic sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan and substantially relaxed them. The future is unclear. Without ratification of the CTBT by India and Pakistan, the treaty may unravel or be viewed as ineffective by the international community.

Promoting Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions

For the next few years, the best America can hope for is that Iraq does not dramatically breakout with a chemical and biological weapons program. Such a breakout would ensure that Iraq's Islamic neighbors would sustain their own chemical and biological weapons programs. Controlling the spread of chemical and biological weapons elsewhere promises to be a demanding enterprise. If these weapons proliferate into the hands of rogues, U.S. military requirements obviously will increase.

Handling Nuclear Abolition Arguments

Several NGOs might seek to mobilize wide political support for nuclear abolition, especially after the international fallout from the NATO-Yugoslav war. Considerable public discussion has already occurred regarding various nuclear abolition and virtual nuclear arsenal regimes. A number of retired military officers, primarily in the United States, have articulated a case for nuclear

abolition. They argue that America is the dominant military power and does not need nuclear weapons for extended conventional deterrence or regional power projection. Others, however, respond that reducing the nuclear inventory below about 2,000 warheads could prove highly destabilizing. Should the abolitionists gain momentum, the administration will need to develop a campaign to counter their arguments.

Creating a Long-Term Strategy

Major advances occurred in the global arms control and disarmament process in the first 6 years after the Soviet Union's collapse. In 1998, progress slowed, and even suffered reversals in the cases of the Nonproliferation Treaty and Missile Technology Control Regime. The question is whether the current difficulties are temporary, or represent a more fundamental change in future prospects. Several alternative long-term strategies should be considered:

- *Tend the Garden.* This strategy assumes that setbacks are temporary. It is a maintenance-and-repair strategy to prevent fundamental reversals in current arms control and disarmament regimes. Its central focus would be to place U.S. and Russian arms control and disarmament relations in a holding pattern. The United States will not alter the nuclear regime as codified by START I and the ABM Treaty. In other arms control and disarmament regimes such as the NPT, CWC, and BWC, the focus would be on regime maintenance and pragmatic expansion where possible.

- *Downgrade Arms Control and Disarmament.* This strategy is based on the assumption that the arms control and disarmament process has reached a state of stasis, if not exhaustion. Its central strategic requirement would be the U.S. maintenance of credible extended deterrence for allies and other friends. The United States will be

required to take a variety of actions to deal with future asymmetric threats such as the deployment of robust theater and national missile defenses. Those deployments would no longer be hostage to an "obsolete bilateral relationship" with Russia, or other arms control negotiations.

- *Leap Ahead.* This strategy assumes that much of the arms control process, especially regarding nuclear weapons, has become too bureaucratic and limited in strategic vision. With the START bilateral negotiating process stalled and the India-Pakistani nuclear test severely damaging the NPT, this option posits a more dramatic nuclear disarmament initiative, for example, a unilateral U.S. move to START II levels without Duma ratification. The unilateral nature of such a dramatic gesture, however, could create severe verification and parity problems.

No one alternative may be consciously chosen, but major features of each may be orchestrated in the future. Regardless of the option, the United States will need a long-term strategy because previous momentum in the arms control and disarmament process can no longer be expected to continue.

Net Assessment

The arms control and disarmament process flourished in the early 1990s, but lately has encountered delays and setbacks. One reason is that it is tackling more difficult issues than before. Another reason is that international political dynamics have begun acting against it. In the coming years, arms control and disarmament will continue to serve as an important feature of U.S. strategy. However, it may not be as effective as once hoped and may require major policy changes.