

ideological basis of the conservatives, but would moderate it by acknowledging that our foreign policy should not focus primarily on fighting and winning World War III and that for the foreseeable future the Soviet Union is going to remain a powerful and hostile force in the world. Our actions should be guided by older conservative axioms. Abroad, as at home, there are no permanent remedies for the pains of our political condition; we can, at best, hope to ameliorate those conditions. The unintended consequences of foreign policy, as of domestic policy, are likely to be as or even more important than the desired ones. The limitations on political action, in short, mean that prudence is the most necessary quality in a statesman, something both left- and right-wing Americans have forgotten in their efforts to solve the problems of world politics by ending world politics.

The limits to American power and the permanence of international conflict were considerations very much in the mind of Henry Kissinger as he began his attempt to reconstruct American foreign policy in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Astute

as his policies were, he seemed to have forgotten that traumatized nations need something beyond competence if they are to recover. They need an explanation of why it is reasonable for them to send their men out to die. Kissinger dealt with the collapse of the American will to fight by isolating, as far as it was possible, the conduct of American foreign policy from the public and by relying on diplomacy. If the people were not willing to fight, he would not ask them to. Secret, shuttle diplomacy did not require popular or congressional support when the going was good. When diplomacy failed, however, and American foreign policy required the expenditure of lives and money as in Angola in 1975, the weaknesses of Kissinger's style of cabinet diplomacy were revealed. Some efforts to establish a policy of neo-containment seem to call for containment without the ideology of the Cold War. These calls and Kissinger's strategy have both failed to understand what Senator Moynihan has long pointed out: Men will not vote to go out and get themselves killed unless they have a vivid idea of what the fight is about.

The articles in this issue suggest ways in which competence can be restored to the conduct of American foreign policy, but it is the revival of the anti-Communist ideology that will provide the rock on which our morale and future efforts can be based. This ideology will face many problems, not the least of which will be that anti-Communism and support for liberal regimes abroad do not always seem to be synonymous. This gap created severe problems at home in the 1960s. The saving grace of the bad times in which we live is that the necessity for collaboration with less than perfect governments is now more visible because the Soviet Union is stronger. Nor will an anti-Communist ideology necessarily prevent the American people from deciding that the safety of the West and the safety of America are two different things. Neither competence nor ideology can take the place of a sense of national honor. This can only be created by genuine leadership, by men who ask whether after two hundred years of republican government and two world wars, ours will be the generation that turns its back on civilization.

—SR

America on War and Diplomacy

Stephen Rosen

HIDING FROM THE NUCLEAR AGE

In American strategic thought, MAD policies of convenience are a bad substitute for serious defense planning.

For the last 15 years American thinking about nuclear war has been dominated by an idea that by now seems as natural as it is simple. War will be deterred by the existence of a stable nuclear balance. But what if deterrence fails? The strategic theories of the 1960s were suitable for the 1960s, and the emphasis on deterrence was proper when the chance of war was small. But an examination of the development of American strategic thought reveals that an emphasis on what ought to be done if nuclear war did break out was often thought necessary. Since World War II, the major groups involved in American strategic planning, the scientists, the military, and, later, the civilian strategic analysts, have traditionally displayed a striking sobriety when real danger was in the air. With the United States today no

longer in a dominant strategic position, it is necessary to restore realism to American strategic planning.

At the outset of the Cold War, the American scientific community would have preferred that problems caused by the emergence of nuclear weapons be resolved through international agreements regulating the use of atomic power. Yet when efforts towards this end quickly proved impractical, the scientists did not immediately turn to assured destruction, the doctrine with which they would later become closely associated. This is surprising. Military theorists such as Bernard Brodie had already articulated the essential elements of assured destruction and the doctrine is one with obvious allure to the scientific mind.

The idea of a mutual hostage relation among nuclear powers is simple and logical, far more so than the messy, inele-

gant theories that had emerged from conventional military operations. Unlike the unpredictability of conventional wars, assured destruction promised a simple war. Assuming that the enemy had also adopted assured destruction, war would be based on attacks against undefended civilian targets and would involve no clash of opposing armed forces. Cities would simply stand still while attempts were made to destroy them. In addition, because of their familiarity with missile and aircraft engineering and with the physical effects of nuclear explosions, assured destruction would give the scientists a distinct advantage over the generals in any political struggle for influence in the area of strategic policy. Assured destruction thus meant that military competence would become, all at once, superfluous.

In the area of international politics, assured destruction offered the scientists the realization of their dream of world peace through world harmony. It seemed

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to eliminate the need for arms races, for once both nuclear powers obtained enough second-strike weapons, they would stop producing additional weapons. At the same time, a fear of mutual annihilation would create a common interest between the United States and Soviet Union. By forcing the two superpowers to overcome their differences, assured destruction thus contained strong incentives for the creation of a peaceful world order.

For all these reasons, it might be expected that the scientific community would have embraced assured destruction with open arms. Instead, for the 12 years beginning with 1948, the scientists advocated a policy diametrically opposed to assured destruction—they called for the adoption of defensive systems, whose chief purpose would be to minimize the destruction that a nuclear war would cause the United States.

In 1952, the dean of American nuclear scientists, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and many of his colleagues participated in a conference called the Lincoln Summer Study. The conference discussed the state of American air defenses and concluded that the American nuclear force structure had become grossly distorted by its emphasis on offensive strategy. After speaking with some of the participants, Stewart Alsop reported that "the experts believe" that the Soviet offensive forces were becoming increasingly more dangerous, and that the remedy lay in "very early warning devices, ground-to-air guided missiles," and an emergency engineering project that would construct these defenses at a cost of up to "\$25 billion in a two-to-three year period." The defensive orientation of the scientific community was underlined further during the Atomic Energy Commission's 1954 investigation of Oppenheimer. Suspicious of Oppenheimer for a variety of reasons, the investigators also wanted to know if Oppenheimer had "espoused what might be described as a Maginot line type of defense?" In response to this hostile question, a flock of professors from Harvard, MIT, Cal Tech, and Columbia testified in Oppenheimer's behalf that his call for greater defensive measures was perfectly sensible. Isadore Rabi of Columbia, who later went on to edit the anti-nuclearist *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, summed up the position of his colleagues:

... I think Dr. Oppenheimer and I agreed. It is threefold. One, we think that to protect the lives of Americans is worth anybody's while. Two, that one is in a stronger position in a war if one is fighting from a protected citadel, rather than just being open. ... Thirdly, and it is more political, that the existence of such a defense would make us less liable to intimidation and blackmail.

Today, conservative critics of the assured destruction doctrine argue that the doctrine may fail if the Soviet Union decides not to leave itself open to attack as we do, and concentrates rather on winning the military contest. Rabi was making a similar

point 25 years ago when he testified that the threat to retaliate

is a psychological weapon, a deterrent. But the other fellow may not be the same as you, and you have to have some kind of defense before he does you irreparable damage, and, furthermore, your plans may not go as you expect. They may miscarry. Unless you have a defense, you are not getting another chance.

These and similar statements by other scientists testifying before the Agency are remarkable primarily because they came in many cases from men who by 1967 would be opposing an anti-ballistic missile defense of the United States. This shift in attitude is explained in part by the scientists' eventual disillusionment with their earlier experiences. The Air Force interpreted their advocacy of strategic defense as an attack on the Strategic Air Command, and so responded with its own criticisms of the scientists' "Maginot Line" mentality. More important, by the late sixties the scientists were arguing that technological progress had rendered unfeasible their earlier vision of the United States as an impenetrable, protected citadel.

To be sure, technology had changed, but not necessarily to the point where defense was no longer worth pursuing. Although ICBMs were far more difficult to defend against than bombers, the radar, missiles, and computers used in defense systems had also improved dramatically. As imperfect as our actual anti-bomber and proposed anti-missile defenses might have been, both would have reduced the extent to which the United States would have been open to blackmail and intimidation, as Rabi pointed out.

Unfortunately, what had changed most during these intervening years was just this perception of the probability of blackmail and intimidation. So long as the

Korean War, the Soviet-American dispute over Germany, and the memories of Stalin's diplomacy contributed to the feeling that a direct Soviet-American conflict was possible, the scientists regarded strategic defenses as attractive. But as the danger of war began to recede, the scientists became preoccupied with the disadvantages of strategic defenses. On the practical side, they stressed costs; we would be forever having to improve and increase these strategic defenses in response to the Soviet Union's continual development of its offensive forces. On the psychological level the scientists feared that because strategic defenses made war seem less apocalyptic, statesmen would be more willing to risk war. Moreover, the scientists feared that strategic defenses would be destabilizing, encouraging the enemy to attack before the strategic defenses were implemented. The scientists, then, advocated strategic defenses in the early 1950s when the danger of war was great and opposed them in the late 1960s when the danger of war was small. Why?

An explanation for this puzzling intellectual shift suggests itself. The presence of danger concentrates the mind. Its absence removes the immediate need to make realistic plans for survival, leaving one free to pursue those objectives that had been set aside when tensions were at their peak. By the time of the post-Khrushchev thaw, the scientific community was fully

*In a similar fashion, the strong advocate of arms control, Paul Warnke, defended the anti-Chinese anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system in 1967 when the Peking government seemed to be in the hands of hostile fanatics and the danger of war, however slight, seemed real. He, too, used the argument that an ABM would reduce our vulnerability to nuclear attack and intimidation, and he, too, washed his hands of the whole idea once relations with Peking improved and the danger of war receded.



content to pursue its natural preferences by openly advocating assured destruction.

For its part, the military community responded to the birth of the nuclear age by demobilizing. In 1946 and 1947 the Air Force possessed perhaps two dozen Nagasaki-type atomic bombs, but these were kept unassembled in stockpiles. It would have required a 24-man crew two days to assemble one bomb, but there were no such crews available after the men of the Manhattan Project had dispersed. Thus, the Air Force's military strategy remained essentially unchanged from World War II. To counter any Soviet advance into West Europe, the Air Force would attempt to destroy Soviet war production, particularly its oil-refining capacity. This would eventually weaken the Red Army, but it would be defeated only by allied armies fighting it on the ground. This doctrine was not illogical given the weaknesses of our atomic forces and the history of the war against Hitler. The equivalent of at least 500 Nagasaki bombs had been dropped on Germany, most of them in the last 12 months of the war, and still the Wehrmacht had fought to the end. The U.S. Air Force had 29 atomic bombs to drop on a country 30 times as large as Germany. It was an air-power doctrine with strictly military objectives, although it was recognized that the destruction of Soviet oil refineries would inevitably be accompanied by the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

There was, however, an obvious discrepancy between the plans of the Air Force and the political need of the United States to protect West Europe without turning the entire continent into a battlefield. By 1948 the Berlin crisis forced the military to rethink the problem of safeguarding Ger-

many without destroying it. The hour found its man in Curtis LeMay, who advocated the expansion of the American nuclear arsenal for the purpose of "nation killing." We would conduct a campaign lasting about one month to destroy the 70 largest urban-industrial centers in the Soviet Union, which would, by itself, end the war. This was not a doctrine of deterrence, but of military victory. Nonetheless, its bloodthirstiness set off a ferocious debate within the armed services. Rear Admiral Daniel Gallery denounced the strategy as clearly unacceptable: "For a civilized society like the United States, the broad purpose of a war cannot simply be the destruction and annihilation of the enemy." The strategy of annihilation "is a strategy of desperation and weakness. I believe we should abandon the idea of destroying enemy cities one after the other until he gives up and find some better way of gaining our objective."

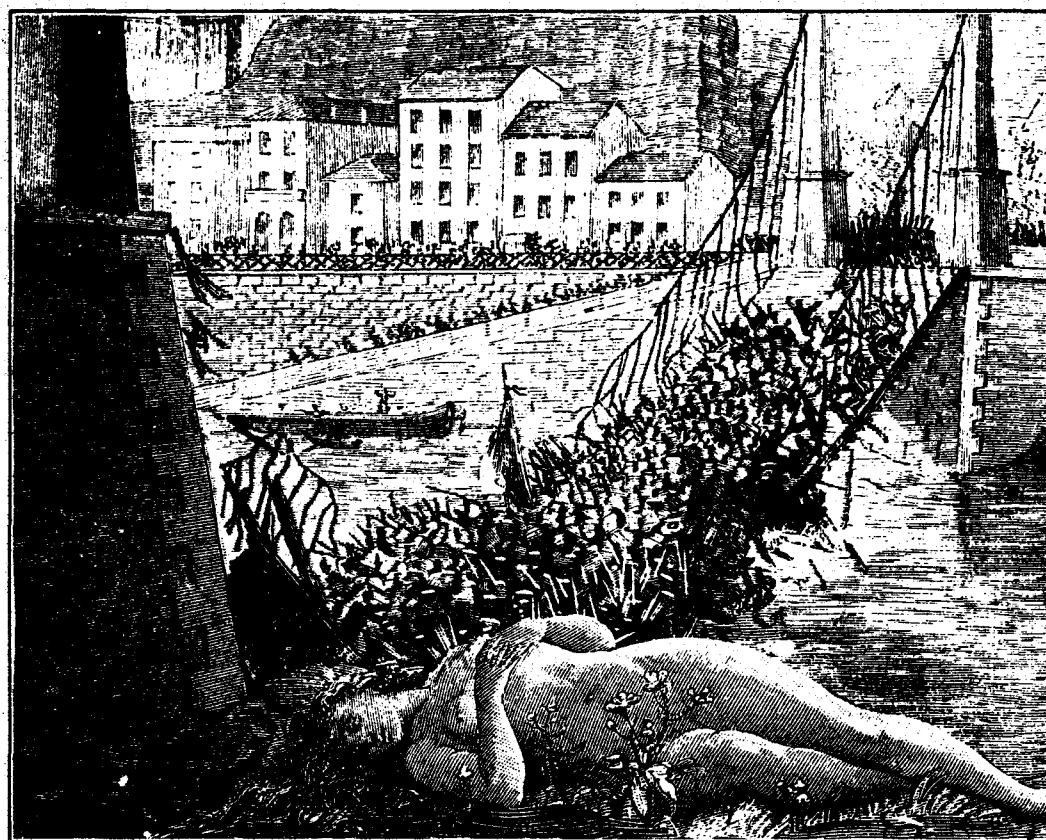
This argument was in some measure the reaction of an Admiral to a war without a Navy. But it was also the reaction of a soldier to a strategy designed to kill as many enemy non-combatants as possible. Moreover, Gallery's conclusions were supported by an inter-service committee chaired by an Air Force General, Hubert Harmon. This committee unanimously agreed that, as long as our conventional defenses remained weak, it would be necessary to plan for an attack on Soviet cities, but that such attacks would disgust the world, and would become terribly dangerous once the Soviet Union had the means to retaliate.

Contributing to the fierceness of this debate was the simple fact that there were not enough nuclear weapons to go around. Not until 1951 were there as many as 400 atomic bombs in the U.S. arsenal, which was still inadequate for use against both

military and urban targets. The age of nuclear plenty that quickly followed silenced but did not resolve the debate over what kind of targets to attack. Although money has continued to be available for routine development and modernization, which has allowed the services to acquire more and more warheads, in the absence of a well-defined doctrine, this has been an incremental process without a clear logic. As a result, the military has never formulated a clear rationale to help justify the acquisition of weapons powerful and accurate enough to attack the primary military targets inside the Soviet Union, the Soviet ICBM silos. Instead, the armed forces have until comparatively recently acquiesced in the doctrine of assured destruction.

This acquiescence is explained largely by the difficulty the military has had in coming to terms with its mission in a nuclear age. From its viewpoint, additional money for strategic forces has always meant less money for aircraft carriers, tanks, and manned aircraft. Soldiers, sailors, and pilots are more likely to be motivated by the prospect of combat than by the idea of cruising in a hidden submarine or sitting in a missile silo command post. The military thus has been content with a strategy that limits its strategic nuclear obligations, but which releases monies for conventional wars against Soviet soldiers. In addition, the American military has never taken to defensive strategies. If the alternative to assured destruction is a strategy of shelters, urban evacuation, and ballistic missile defenses, all designed to minimize American civilian casualties, then the military prefers to retain an offensive posture.

The early 1960s was a period of crisis, and, as in previous crises, the heightened tension that marked the first Kennedy years resulted in realistic strategic thinking. The question raised by Kennedy during the Berlin crisis of 1961 was the same as the question raised by the scientists during the crises of the 1950s. How can we protect the American people? Once again, it seemed necessary to think about what would happen if deterrence failed and war ensued. When Kennedy, in July 1961, called for a rapid expansion of the American civil defense program, he was advocating the only means available for increasing the safety of Americans. Given the relatively small size of the Soviet nuclear strike force, this shelter program would have been extremely useful. As more and more American missiles became operational, we obtained a nuclear superiority that made it possible to consider a strategy of striking at Soviet missile installations, instead of Soviet cities, and so reduce the number of casualties on both sides. This was in fact the policy set forth by McNamara in his speech at Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1962. But having begun, like



the scientists, by calling for programs that would reduce civilian suffering, the Kennedy administration quickly backed away and adopted the principles of assured destruction. After the Cuban missile crisis, the beginnings of detente together with the growing superiority of America's nuclear arsenal made war seem quite distant.

For his part, McNamara, while dedicated to the security of the nation, was also determined to establish strict and rational civilian control over the American military. Not surprisingly, this desire for rational controls found its strategy in assured destruction, which under McNamara reached fruition and has continued to dominate our strategic policies to the present time.

Students of bureaucratic politics have long noted that it is easiest to bend an organization to one's will if it is possible to set out clear criteria by which the performance of the organization can be measured. It is difficult to apply such criteria to a peacetime army, since the only real criterion of military success is victory on the battlefield. Assured destruction, however, offered an opportunity to lay down straightforward measures of success in a nuclear war. If we could "deliver" payloads of a few thousand tons to a finite list of fixed Soviet locations under a certain set of conditions, we could rest easy. No more money would need be spent on these weapons, no matter what the generals said. With this doctrine, strategic success became almost as simple to define as success in delivering milk, and civilian control, in this area at least, was enormously facilitated. It is not surprising that McNamara quickly dropped the idea of "counter-force" targeting against Soviet strategic forces. An enemy could hide, move, defend, or increase his military assets, and we would have to increase our forces to deal with these problems. Nuclear war would then become as complicated as conventional war. Thus, the criteria of being able to destroy one-third of the Soviet population and two-thirds of its industry were sufficient for McNamara to justify a 10 percent cut in the Navy Polaris fleet, and to halt Minuteman deployment at 1000.

The problem today, unfortunately, is that our present strategy was made in happier circumstances than we now enjoy and lacks that fixed concern with national survival which now is more important. During the 1960s, strategic analysts busied themselves inventing scenarios for the initiation of nuclear war. The most plausible ones assumed the outbreak of an anti-Soviet rebellion in East Germany, followed by a West German invasion of East Germany, American intervention, and general war. This ignored the fact that there had already been massive riots in East Germany in 1953 during which we had done what might have been predicted—exactly nothing. Now, it is easy to imagine a Soviet-American war for control of the Persian Gulf. We cannot permit Soviet control of this part of the

world. The Soviets may well believe that we have neither the strength nor the resolve to resist them. Yet, if they do march into Iran, and we do respond, what will happen if we do unexpectedly well, and the Soviet Union is faced with a massive military defeat right on its own border? What will happen if we do so poorly that we must contemplate the destruction of our expeditionary force? Either side may decide that the threat to use—or actual use of—nuclear weapons is preferable to the alternative.

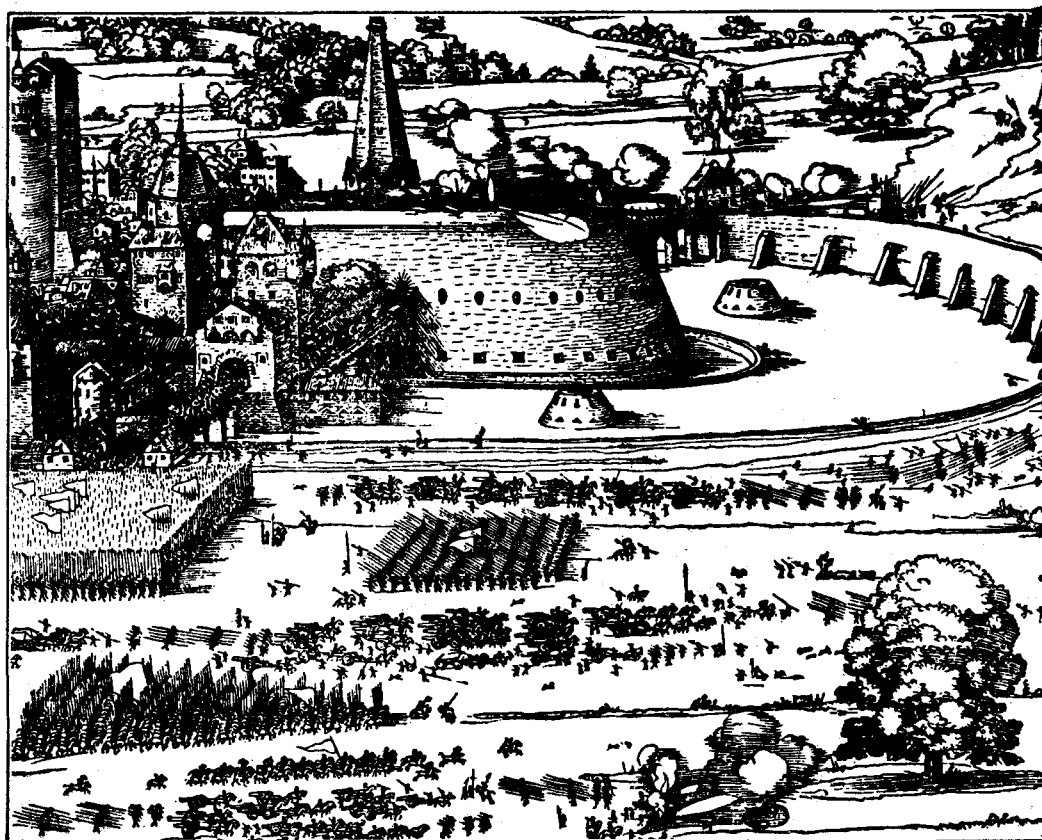
In view of this new danger we must consider, as others have done during earlier crises, how best to protect ourselves. To do this, we will have to overcome our fear of "instability," an idea that for the last 15 years has paralyzed any movement toward strategic defenses. We have convinced ourselves that the USSR-U.S. relation is "stable" if we are able to kill each other's civilians, but that war will result if we try to reduce the amount of damage civilians would have to endure in a war. As we begin defensive programs, the Soviet Union, it is supposed, will perceive a threat to its ability to strike at American civilians and missiles, and thus will decide to go to war to prevent any further erosion of its position.

Only someone who has immersed himself in the arcana of strategic theory to the exclusion of everything else could begin to believe this. It is implausible that the Soviet Union would start a nuclear war that would cause the deaths of millions of Soviet citizens only because we had begun serious planning for the evacuation of our cities—planning which could save the lives of tens of millions of Americans. The Soviet Union itself has already completed extensive plans to evacuate its cities in a crisis. At no time did we feel in the least bit compelled to start a war before these plans were completed. In a crisis, the evacuation of American cities would certainly prompt

the evacuation of Soviet cities, if this had not already occurred, but not a strike that would leave the Soviet Union in ruins.

As its long history suggests, civil defense has never been provocative. American civil defense efforts during the Berlin crisis of 1961, the Chinese civil defense effort in the wake of the 1969 border clashes with the Soviet Union, and the sharp increase in the Soviet civil defense program in the early 1970s induced no threats or attacks. Yet these programs, in theory, were "destabilizing." Nuclear war, however, even if one is superior and protected, is a frightening prospect, and it is not likely to be touched off by anything short of impending military or political catastrophe.

To a surprising degree, there is agreement, shared by the liberal employees of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and the conservative analysts of the Committee on the Present Danger, that civil defense programs based on urban evacuation can be very effective in saving civilian lives. ACDA has estimated that 10 to 15 percent of the Soviet population would be killed by an American attack if the Soviet cities had been evacuated. T.K. Jones of the Committee on the Present Danger has estimated a death rate of about 5 percent. Given the uncertainties associated with such estimates, it would be foolish to take a dogmatic position in defense of either figure. The difference between 5 and 15 percent dead is quite large; in the case of the Soviet Union, it is the difference between 13 and 40 million dead. Although both figures represent catastrophic damage, they are closer to the fatalities suffered by the Soviet Union in World War II than they are to the total destruction of



civilization that we usually believe will result from a nuclear war.

The other major method by which American lives might be protected is through the use of ballistic missile defenses (BMD) to shoot down enemy warheads. Proposals to do this have created an enormous amount of controversy, largely on two grounds. First, the familiar complaint that BMD would be destabilizing and would make war more likely; second, that it could be easily overwhelmed by the attacker. Here, again, we find that there is historical evidence that suggests that the importance of "stability" has been exaggerated. Both the United States and the Soviet Union began work on operational anti-missile defenses in the 1960s. This caused neither war nor an increase in tensions, though, of course, Soviet construction did create pressure in Congress for a matching American system. Even if greatly more effective than its predecessor, BMD in the 1980s will not provoke war any more than anti-missile defenses did in the 1960s. No BMD system under consideration will be accurate enough to prevent extraordinary destruction in the event of nuclear war—although BMD could help to preserve our national existence. Again, the idea that a government would go to war just because its enemy had begun work on its defenses is completely fanciful. A government so ready to risk destruction would have gone to war long ago.

We should not find it alarming that governments *are* likely to begin work on their defenses when they see their enemy doing so. If we can protect our population as well as or perhaps better than the enemy, why should we be unhappy that we can kill "only" five instead of fifty million Soviet citizens? Our thinking on this subject has been so twisted by the ideas of "stability"

and assured destruction that it has become necessary to remind ourselves of the obvious: We have absolutely no interest, as such, in killing Russian civilians. Simple morality as well as reasons of state demand that we try to minimize the number of civilian casualties in any war we fight. As our ability to defend ourselves increases, our need to hold innocent Russians hostage decreases. Soviet BMD systems are no threat to us as long as we can protect ourselves at least as well. If both sides deploy defenses, there is likely to be a competition between the two, but it will be a contest to see who can save the most lives on its own side. On the surface, at least, this seems to be a competition a good deal more benign than the present competition in destructive power.

It is by no means clear, however, whether we can do anything to protect ourselves with missile defenses. If the Soviet Union can simply add more offensive warheads more cheaply than we can shoot them down, the defense will be playing a losing game. This is a complex technical question, but some figures are suggestive. In 1969, the largest Soviet missile, the SS-9, cost around \$30 million, according to the congressional testimony of American Defense Department experts. The latest Soviet heavy missile, the SS-18, is far more sophisticated than the SS-9. Assume it also costs \$30 million. If each SS-18 carries ten warheads, one additional warhead will cost an average of \$4 million. In 1969, the American anti-missile interceptors cost approximately half that amount. These interceptors, however, needed radars and computers to guide them. The radars alone cost over \$100 million each, and were relatively vulnerable to enemy attack. Had

we started building extra radars to make sure enough would stay in operation, it would have run into billions of extra dollars. If the need for radars and computers could be removed, however, the cost of the defense would drop radically. For the last ten years, the Army has been working on just this problem, and with some success. By utilizing interceptors that use methods and hardware analogous to those now used in conventional "smart" weapons, the need for ground-based radars and computers is greatly reduced, if not eliminated. No revolutionary technology is involved, only sensors and miniature computers derived from those used in existing air-to-air missiles costing \$100,000. The methods that make it possible to shoot down a multi-million dollar aircraft with a missile costing thousands of dollars are also applicable to anti-ballistic missile defense.

It will, of course, be possible for the attacker to fool, blind, or destroy some of these new homing interceptors. The battle between offense and defense will become a complicated military problem, instead of remaining a simple problem of delivery. Yet the possibility of substantially reducing American civilian casualties, in conjunction with civil defense, does exist. A doctrine designed to reduce the number of American dead would deal with the existing danger of a war caused by miscalculation, and would reduce the extent to which the United States would be sensitive to Soviet nuclear diplomacy. This doctrine would emphasize defenses because it would recognize that an American offensive build-up that would enable us to strike at Soviet missile silos would inevitably be countered by the development of Soviet mobile missiles. Unconcerned with the need to make their mobile missiles compatible with an arms-control agreement, the Soviet Union could rapidly and relatively cheaply deploy missiles that we could not find and so could not destroy. A doctrine of damage limitation would evaluate the success of strategic programs by counting the number of American lives saved, rather than of Soviets killed. It would acknowledge that strikes at enemy civilian targets are, as Admiral Gallery noted long ago, a desperate measure, and the need to carry out these strikes should be minimized.

It is a curious fact that our fundamental military doctrine for the last 15 years has rested on the threat to commit suicide. Sober reflection reveals that such a doctrine was irresponsible, unnecessary, but convenient. We have escaped the consequences of our irresponsibility, first, because we were strong and the world was peaceful, but also, because we were lucky and the Soviet Union cautious. It would be an error of the highest order for us to allow the foreign policy and even the existence of the United States to continue to depend on the caution of the Soviet Union. We live in bad times, and our doctrine must come to terms with them. □



Stephen Sestanovich

RENEWING A BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP

Our allies in NATO are different now.

It is now widely if not well understood that America's alliances are a problem. The point has of late been so tirelessly expounded that those with a little historical perspective have had to explain that something called "disarray" is the usual condition of the Western bloc. And yet these corrective views have failed to overcome the impression that the difficulties the alliance now faces are in many ways quite new—so new that we may not be ready for them.

The most important change defining the present debate about the alliance is the growth of Soviet power, but important as this is, it only begins to describe the problem. In one respect after another, the patterns of past crises and disagreements are being reversed. Past alliance crises were activated, curiously enough, by the prospect of Soviet-American relaxation; this one is created instead by Soviet-American tension and fears of war. Where once the Europeans feared that the United States would let them down, now the United States angrily detects appeasement in them. If once the United States declined to negotiate with the Soviet Union so as to protect European morale, now European morale seems to leave no choice but to accept Soviet negotiating offers. Above all, earlier conflicts within the alliance over extra-European issues did not impair unity against the Soviets. By contrast, events elsewhere in the world could now break down the fundamental alliance structure of East-West politics.

Little remains, in short, of the time when the most terrifying prospect the alliance had to face was that someday the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the United States might disappear. Past analyses of the politics of the alliance often asked, in one way or another, whether it could survive if this happened. The anxiety was sharp even when hypothetical, for its premise seemed undeniable: The direct physical security of the United States did not require defense of the perimeter that it

had marked out against Soviet expansionism. Its commitment to that defense seemed instead to depend on how broadly the United States defined its interests. And as a result the fear arose that in a pinch the United States would treat its allies as a nuisance, a source of risk without compensating benefit. Although Europeans wondered how the United States would behave in wartime, their fear was equally political: What would the United States do if it found that the allies' political goals could be pursued only at the expense of its own?

That the United States might be dissuaded from the very large commitments it had assumed was not lost on the Soviet Union, which sought room for maneuver in the uncertainties of American allies. Playing on German fears, for example, Khrushchev's February 1961 letter to Adenauer warned him explicitly that the United States and Soviet Union were nations with global interests, to which the concerns of smaller powers would sometimes have to be subordinated. Better then

to be cooperative. The tenor of Khrushchev's approaches to American leaders was similar. Didn't they see that issues like Berlin should not be allowed to obstruct the search for better relations? Hence his taunt to Kennedy: Having defeated Germany in the war, was the United States now unable to control it?

Certainly U.S. allies could be made out to be a burden. In Berlin, Germany asked the United States to forgo détente with the Soviet Union; at Suez, Britain and France asked that we pass up openings among non-aligned states; as Soviet power grew everywhere, the allies asked for always more risky commitments. In every case, the active and nagging question was, would we let them down? Between this past pattern and the present, the symbolic bridge was West German Foreign Minister Walter Scheel's telling remark to Henry Kissinger in 1969: His country, he said, no longer feared Soviet-American condominium. Quite the contrary, the allies were eager to make the most of détente.

The end of a crisis, it seemed: Détente resolved the anxiety that had been part of alliance politics since its inception. But it only seemed to raise more acutely the question, what would become of NATO itself? Like other organizations that had outlived their original purpose, the alliance was to be recast. And so on its twentieth birthday, with the pace of East-West détente accelerating, NATO's leaders pledged that the Atlantic partnership would take up the common concerns of modern industrial societies—environmental pollution, alienated youth, and so forth. Similarly, when Henry Kissinger reported to Congress on the state of détente in 1974, his observations on American alliances implicitly assumed that their main problem was obsolescence. "The experience of the past year," he insisted, "has demonstrated that there is no contradiction between vigorous, organic alliances and a more positive relationship with adversaries; indeed they are mutually reinforcing." Even critiques of American alliance policy, like the Democrats' of 1976, treated the problem as how to maintain solidarity



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