

WHO'S IN CHARGE

LAWRENCE
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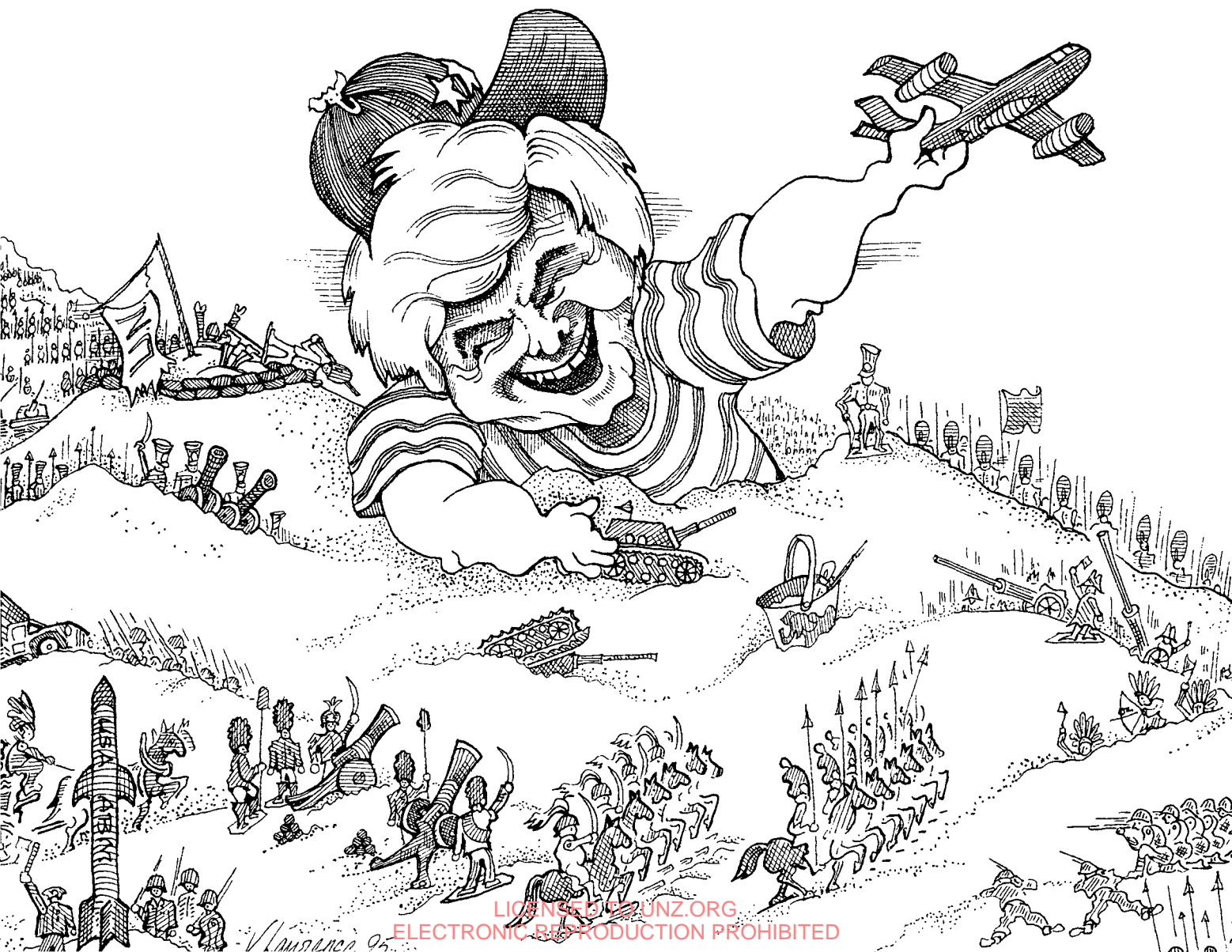
Since its publication during the 1994 congressional campaign, the Republican Contract with America has dominated the nation's political agenda. Because the congressional election focused mainly on domestic political issues, not much attention was paid to the national security planks of the Republican manifesto. But item six, the National Security Restoration Act (NSRA) could have consequences as far reaching, both at home and abroad, as the nine other planks that deal with domestic economic and social policy.

The National Security Restoration Act has six major provisions. The first three focus on defense spending issues. Republicans would restore essential national security funding, restore the firewall between defense and

nondefense spending to prohibit the transfer of money saved from defense reductions into other nondefense programs, and reinstate at the earliest possible date a national missile defense program to protect the United States from limited or accidental nuclear attacks.

Three other provisions, which deal with broader policy issues, would restrict U.S. troops from taking part in military actions under United Nations or foreign command, admit the former Soviet bloc nations of Eastern Europe into NATO as full members beginning in 1999, and create an independent panel to conduct a full review of defense needs and to assess military readiness.

Like other parts of the Contract with America, the NSRA is a highly politicized program. It attacks the national security policies and programs of the Clinton



HERE?

NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE CONTRACT WITH AMERICA

administration, in essence asserting that in his two years in office, President Clinton has failed to develop a coherent security policy, has spent too little on defense, has allowed the defense budget to fund too many nondefense items, has left the United States vulnerable to a nuclear missile attack, has allowed U.S. military forces to be drawn into ill-conceived UN peacekeeping operations, and has failed to provide adequately for security of the European continent.

Just because the six provisions of the NSRA were designed primarily to embarrass the Clinton administration in one of its most politically vulnerable areas does not mean they can be dismissed out of hand. Indeed, even the president's most ardent supporters will agree that his handling of national security issues has called into question America's claim to world leadership, and public opinion polls consistently show that a majority of Americans are dissatisfied with Clinton's foreign policy performance. Can the NSRA withstand a closer look, both in respect to the accuracy of its charges against the Clinton administration and on its own merits? Since policy should determine budgets, it makes sense to look at the three policy issues first.

The Policy Cluster

The proposal to prevent U.S. troops from taking part in military actions that would place them under UN or foreign command was clearly a reaction to the intervention in Somalia. In December 1992, at the request of the UN, some 25,000 American troops were dispatched to provide relief from the famine that was ravaging that sub-Saharan country. Five months later,

after succeeding in that mission, the United States turned the operation over to the UN and withdrew 20,000 people. In October 1993, 18 Army Rangers were killed in a futile attempt to capture the clan leader General Mohammed Farah Aidid. President Clinton blamed the UN for the tragedy and ordered all U.S. troops to be withdrawn by April 1994.

Many Republicans also blamed the failed mission on the UN. They charged that the UN had expanded the mission from feeding the people to creating political order and that a foreign commander had sent American soldiers on a futile and poorly conceived military mission. Neither charge is true.

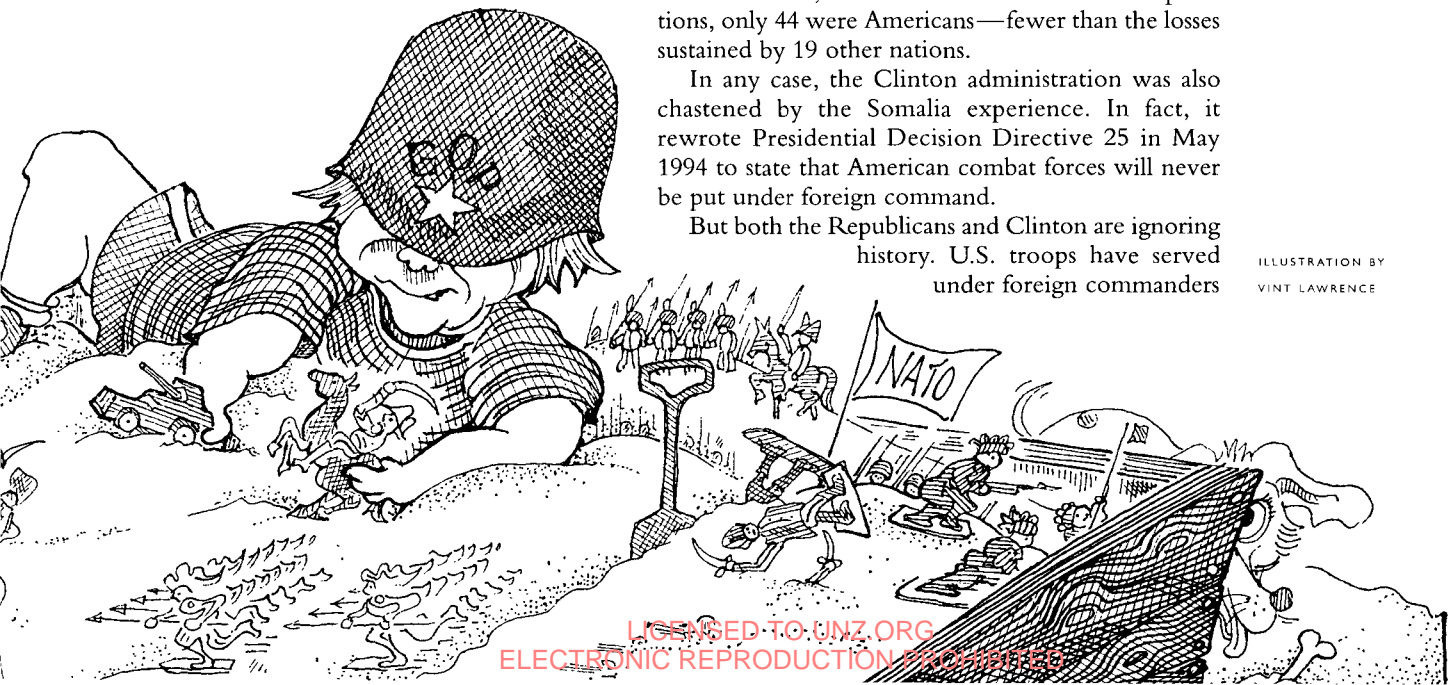
The mission did indeed expand but it was a retired U.S. Navy Admiral, Jonathan Howe, acting as the Secretary-General's on-site representative in Somalia, who put a bounty on General Aidid's head and who persuaded General Colin Powell to send the Rangers to Somalia. Moreover, the October combat operation against Aidid was planned and conducted by the United States separately from the UN command. Indeed, had the United States informed the UN forces about the operation, UN troops may have been able to reinforce the U.S. forces more rapidly and may have prevented some of the Rangers from being killed in battle. A study by the National War College for the Joint Chiefs of Staff concludes that most U.S. problems in Somalia were self-inflicted and not caused by UN interference.

Despite the attention paid to the Somalia intervention, U.S. forces have had and continue to have only a small part in UN operations. Of the 62,000 troops now conducting UN operations, only 948 are Americans. Of the 2,500 killed or wounded in UN operations, only 44 were Americans—fewer than the losses sustained by 19 other nations.

In any case, the Clinton administration was also chastened by the Somalia experience. In fact, it rewrote Presidential Decision Directive 25 in May 1994 to state that American combat forces will never be put under foreign command.

But both the Republicans and Clinton are ignoring history. U.S. troops have served under foreign commanders

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from the time of the Revolutionary War through the era of NATO, and they continue to do so today. In Macedonia, for example, they serve under the command of a Danish officer.

The proposal to expand NATO immediately to include the former Soviet bloc nations of Eastern Europe as full members is based on two premises. First, including these nations in NATO is the best way to promote their peace, prosperity, and security. Second, now is the best time to expand NATO because Russia is preoccupied with its own internal problems and thus is relatively unconcerned with expansion and will not see it as a military threat. Here the Republican proposal does not differ much from the policy of the Clinton administration. The president is on record as saying that NATO expansion is not a question of if but when. Moreover, he has established a Partnership for Peace program that is preparing these Eastern European nations to become full members of the alliance.

Neither the Republicans nor Clinton, however, has addressed basic questions about NATO expansion. For example, which Soviet bloc nations will be recruited to join? Just the Visegrad nations? Or will the invitation extend to the Baltic states that still contain significant numbers of Russians? Second, will Americans (or Englishmen or Belgians) be willing to go to war if Rumania attacks Hungary? Or to defend Slovakia? Or to pay the \$35 billion to make the militaries of the Eastern bloc inter-operable with NATO (especially since the Republican House cut the U.S. contribution to the NATO Infrastructure Fund by two-thirds in 1995 alone—from \$229 million to \$86 million)? Third, is NATO expansion really a substitute for NATO's inability to find an appropriate role in the post-Cold War world? If NATO will not fight in the Balkans, where will it fight? Will not an expanded NATO have an even more difficult time handling problems like Bosnia? Fourth, since the problems of the Eastern bloc countries are mainly economic, should they not join the European Union rather than a military alliance? Fifth, will not NATO expansion be viewed as a hostile action by Russia, particularly if NATO troops are stationed or conducting military exercises on its borders? How would the United States respond if Russia enlarged a revived Warsaw Pact to include Cuba?

The Republican policy proposal to create a 12-person, bipartisan commission to conduct a comprehensive review of defense needs and to assess military readiness is based on two interrelated premises. First, the Clinton administration's Bottom-Up Review of U.S. defense posture did not adequately analyze the demands being placed on U.S. forces in the post-Cold War era. Second, without knowing what our defense needs are, how can we determine whether our forces are ready to carry out their tasks—in other words, what do they need to be ready for?

The Republican criticism of the Clinton administration is correct but for the wrong reason. The Clinton administration did not adequately assess U.S. defense needs. Indeed, it essentially accepted the program it inherited from the Bush administration—that this nation must be prepared to fight two major

regional wars simultaneously—without initially providing as much money as was in the Bush program.

An independent panel could provide two things missing from the Bottom-Up Review. First, it could decide whether U.S. forces should be designed primarily to fight two major regional contingencies or whether the Pentagon should focus more on low-level conflicts. To put it another way, what are the criteria for using U.S. military forces in the post-Cold War world? Second, the panel can assess whether the Pentagon has evaluated the threats from Iraq and North Korea realistically or whether it has inflated them to preserve as much of its Cold War force structure as possible. Since the commission is supposed to complete an analysis by January 1996, its report could provide the basis for a campaign debate on U.S. national security strategy.

The Budgetary Planks

The three budgetary planks in the NSRA also are based on certain premises. The first, which calls for continuing essential national security funding, assumes that Clinton has gutted the defense budget and that his failure to fund defense adequately has undermined U.S. credibility around the world. Both these assumptions are wrong.

True, Clinton proposed \$120 billion less for defense over fiscal years 1994–99 than George Bush had projected as he was leaving office. Even assuming that Bush would have fully funded his program, the cut was relatively small, about 1 percent a year. Moreover, one-third of the proposed reduction, about \$40 billion, came from using lower inflation and pay assumptions than the Bush administration had used. Clinton promised to add to his budget if these assumptions proved incorrect. And he has kept his word, adding back some \$36 billion in fiscal years 1995 and 1996 alone. Moreover, when the Republicans had the chance to correct the funding deficiencies in the Clinton plan, they added only \$33 billion over seven years, less than one-half of 1 percent a year.

The Republicans are correct in noting the damage to American credibility around the world. But the damage has little to do with the amount the United States spends on defense. In 1995 the United States spent more than four times as much as any other nation on defense, almost twice as much as the other 15 NATO nations combined, and more than all the rest of the major nations in the world combined. U.S. credibility around the world is suffering because of administration indecisiveness in places like Bosnia, North Korea, and Somalia—indecisiveness common to both the Clinton and Bush administrations and shared, as well, by the Republicans in Congress. As Republican strategist William Kristol has noted, the Republicans are also confused on foreign policy.

The second budgetary plank seeks to restore the firewall between defense and nondefense spending that existed between 1990 and 1994. This provision worked well and should be restored. Defense and nondefense programs should be evaluated on their own merits. The need for the B-2 bomber should be discussed in light of the international situation or as a

tradeoff with the power projection capabilities of the aircraft carrier. It is difficult to justify a multibillion dollar defense system on an emotional level when it is pitted against a comparatively inexpensive but critical program like a school lunch project.

This nation can afford to spend 4 percent of its GNP on defense if it is necessary. However, because the Pentagon budget now contains the majority of discretionary funds in the federal budget, some \$5 billion in the defense budget annually goes for some 125 programs that have nothing to do with warfighting—funding for the Boy Scouts, Los Angeles youth programs, the upcoming Olympics in Atlanta, or breast cancer research. Indeed, when Senator Tom Harkin (D-IW) diverted \$210 million in the defense budget for breast cancer research, he rationalized his action by saying that's where the (discretionary) money is.

But in return for restoring the firewalls, Congress should desist from using the defense budget as a jobs program by funding weapons, such as the Seawolf submarine or the B-2 bomber, that even the Pentagon wants to cancel. If it wishes, the federal government can create jobs much more efficiently than through defense spending programs.

The final plank in the budgetary portion of the NSRA calls for reinstating a national missile defense program. Behind this provision is the assumption that the Clinton administration canceled a program of national missile defense even though such a program is technologically ready for deployment and would protect the United States from limited or accidental nuclear attack. Another assumption is that such a deployment would be cost effective and in compliance with the Antiballistic Missile treaty. Both are incorrect.

The Clinton administration does have a ballistic missile defense program, which will consume some \$20 billion over the next five years, 15 percent of which would be spent on research and development for a national missile defense. That will provide a hedge against the emergence of a ballistic missile threat that the Defense Intelligence Agency says cannot be expected before 2005 at the earliest. The Pentagon's deployment efforts right now are focused on theater missile defense for which there is an immediate need and for which the technology is ready for deployment.

Even if Washington could afford the \$40–50 billion necessary to deploy an effective national missile defense, it would violate the ABM treaty and not protect the United States from nuclear attack. The ABM treaty limits the United States and Russia to one site in their respective homelands. Deploying a missile defense at one place in the nation would protect only a small portion of the country. Indeed, the NSRA calls for placing interceptors on both coasts and in the Midwest. And even if one chose to violate unilaterally an existing treaty and pay the prohibitive cost of defending the entire continental United States, the United States still would not be safe. With the miniaturization of nuclear weapons, a potential adversary would likely place a nuclear bomb in a suitcase or car in a big city.

Finally, how can we expect the Russians to ratify the Strategic Arms Reduction treaties (START I and II), which eliminate some 10,000 strategic nuclear

weapons, if we unilaterally abrogate the ABM treaty? It is no wonder that only 28 percent of Americans support the National Missile Defense Program or that former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, once a strong proponent of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, has said that a national missile defense is not justified by the current threat.

Shattering Security Myths

Flawed as it is, the NSRA can nevertheless serve a useful purpose. Even in the post–Cold War era, national security remains important. And candidates and parties should stake out their positions on security issues. Two of the six NSRA planks—creating an independent commission to assess U.S. defense needs and restoring the firewall between defense and nondefense spending—make a good deal of sense and would improve the policy process.

And even the weak provisions deserve to be debated. Only when the nation openly confronts such myths as the underfunding of defense or the necessity of a national missile defense or the expansion of NATO or the real role of the UN can these myths be exploded.

Congressional Republicans themselves have not taken these myths entirely seriously. When they have had to translate the NSRA into specific legislation, they have acted responsibly. For example, they found it unnecessary to add significant funds to the defense program or to mandate immediate deployment of a national missile defense. Instead, they directed the Pentagon to plan for a national missile defense but not build one until cost-effectiveness, military need, and ABM treaty implications are considered. Moreover, they permitted the president to allow Americans to serve under foreign command if he deems it necessary to protect the vital interests of the United States, and they set no specific timetable for NATO expansion.

In fact, the NSRA provision of the Contract with America should not have been necessary in the first place. Because in domestic affairs Congress is expected to be at least a co-equal, if not primary, branch of government, the other nine provisions in the contract were perfectly appropriate. But constitutionally and traditionally national security should be the domain of the president. Congress can and should set limits and make changes at the margin, but coherence, integration, and direction must come from the executive branch.

With the Clinton administration seemingly having lost control of national security policy and America seen by its allies and adversaries as unpredictable and unreliable, it was not surprising that a Congress run by an opposition party should step into the breach even in the area of national security. But a congressionally mandated national security policy would be a disaster for the world's only remaining military and political superpower.

The real answer to the problem is not for Congress to restore national security, but for the president elected in 1996 to give foreign policy the priority it deserves. To date, the NSRA has not done any permanent damage to national security. With luck, the pattern will hold until November 5, 1996. ■

BUT THE
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Unrealized Promise, Avoidable Trouble

**JOHN D.
STEINBRUNER**

IN THEIR RHETORICAL BATTLES OF LATE, proponents of a new world order have generally been routed by the skeptics. The verbal drubbing has been virtually assured by the evident inability of the international community to defend the most fundamental legal standards against a surge of ethnic brutality in Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, Somalia and elsewhere. But it also reflects the enduring prevalence, in the United States at least, of the self-styled realist school of thought that views conflict as endemic in the relationships of sovereign states. The defining purpose of these states, it is said, is accumulating and projecting power, and the net balance of their conflicting impulses is the only feasible form of order. Plenty of historical experience is available, of course, to bolster the argument.

In actual practice, however, the agreed restraints and principles of collaboration that underlie the idea of a new order have fared somewhat better. It can hardly be said that rhetorical defeat has been eclipsed by practical victory, but a major accomplishment has nevertheless been recently achieved. On May 11 the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), due to expire on its 25th anniversary, was continued indefinitely by 174 signatories. That step extends the scope of formal international regulation over the single most consequential assertion of national power—the deployment of nuclear weapons. It was taken despite the strong objections of ardent nationalists to what they consider to be the inherently discriminatory nature of the treaty, which allows current nuclear powers, and only them, to possess nuclear weapons.

The disparity between opinion and practice has itself a significant practical effect. All the major governments are distracted by domestic preoccupations and infected by the pessimistic public mood. None is advancing a strategic design for a new order. New patterns are nonetheless evolving, and unfortunately the critical political relationships that shape them are in trouble. In particular, Russia and China are being excluded from the more advanced forms of collaboration among the industrial democracies, and both are displaying smoldering resentment. As a practical consequence, all the central legal instruments of international security are in some immediate jeopardy, most notably, the Strategic Arms Reduction (START II) treaty, the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). It is even possible that all could unravel. No government or society would find such a result in its real interest, but timely wisdom is not guaranteed simply by the urgent need for it.

The Central Role of the NPT

Hopes for constructive evolution of international collaboration rest primarily on the NPT. The legal regime embedded in the treaty has quietly emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War as the organizing core of general international security arrangements for both procedural and substantive reasons. The NPT encompasses very nearly the entire interna-