

PROGRESS TOWARD ARMS CONTROL

Do Recent Proposals Offer New Grounds for Hope?

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The only effective way we seem to have found to avoid nuclear war is to promote fear of its consequences in the Soviet bloc. Yet it may be that we will have to make substantial progress toward arms control in the next two decades if the possibility of avoiding general nuclear war is to become an acceptable probability. If progress is to be made, it will result not only from international political accommodation, but also from the intensive, collective effort of those scholars and officials who are involved in study, discussion and research regarding national security policy in general, and arms control in particular. In fact, the theory and concepts which they develop may in themselves be a means to the political accommodation which is needed, provided, of course, that corresponding efforts are also made in the Soviet bloc. Conversely, if these scholars and officials fail to apply adequate effort in this area, there may never be a solution to the problem of the threat of nuclear war.

Fortunately, scholars have given increasing attention to arms control, with an impact upon policy which is rare for a profession not usually noted for practical pursuits. The studies, the books and the articles about arms policy in scholarly journals seem to be reaching readily into the places where decisions are made and into the minds which make them.

Most of the discussion about arms control reflects the drastic nature of the threat of nuclear war and the fact that some people feel that relations between the West and the Communist bloc have dangerously unstable characteristics. The power of nuclear weapons makes a high state of mutual preparedness essential. If conditions were such that war appeared to be likely or inevitable, there would be an incentive for striking first in the hope of reducing one's losses. The very awareness of this fact tends to exacerbate tensions and suspicions, as well as increase cautions, on both sides, and makes war more likely, at least in some small degree, through an act of desperation or miscalculation.

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The policy of deterrence—avoiding nuclear war by promoting fear of its consequences in the Soviet Bloc—is our main preventive. And yet, paradoxically, the greater the fear, the greater is the risk of an irrational decision which would subvert the whole purpose of the deterrent policy. The controversy surrounding arms control is set against this background of anxiety.

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Two underlying questions are involved in the controversy: (1) What should our national military posture be in order to counter the communist threat? (2) What should be our policy about arms control? Most experts would agree that these two questions are really two sides of the same coin. Much of the misunderstanding and some of the fuzzy conclusions about arms control nevertheless result from separating these two questions of military posture and arms control. There is a tendency to associate the one with a "hard" policy line and the other with a line of "conciliation." Emphasis on military posture connotes a "realistic" approach to international politics whereas emphasis on arms control or disarmament connotes an "idealistic" approach. On a subconscious level, the dichotomy is identified with war or peace.

There are plenty of historical antecedents for each viewpoint. On one side have been the advocates of "power politics" who believed that national survival and well-being stem only from national power, and who express scorn for the broken dreams and the thwarted plans of the pacifists. On the idealist side have been those who are convinced that the first step toward a better world is a proper vision of that world.

Under the present-day threat of communism and atomic war there is no longer much room for dispute between these groups, at least among those who occupy responsible policy positions and are forced to deal with the pressures daily brought to bear against us. It is extremely difficult to see brotherly love as a valid basis for securing the stability we require in our relations with the Soviet Union and Communist China. We can hardly imagine a serious statesman advocating a Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact

or acquiescing to a Munich agreement in the world of today. Bertrand Russell himself seems to have a practical "non-idealistic" purpose in his opposition to nuclear weapons; he wishes to survive and he is willing to state the price. On the other hand, the danger compels even the most "realistic" leader to avoid the folly of rejecting the possibility of arms control.

Having suggested that the question of military posture and the question of arms control are no longer philosophically divergent, one can demonstrate that they are closely related in terms of military concept. Arms control is one way of altering our military posture, perhaps altering it drastically. Therefore, everyone who has a viewpoint or a vested interest concerning our military posture automatically takes a stand toward arms control which would tend to bring about the kind of military posture he wants. The controversy thus engendered becomes an important factor in and often an obstacle to agreement on arms control policy.

There have been two general viewpoints in recent years about our military posture, roughly identified with the concepts (or slogans) of "finite deterrence" and "counterforce strategy." These viewpoints approximate those positions taken by the Navy and the Air Force, respectively. Counter-slogans are also used: the finite deterrence advocates accuse their opponents of favoring a policy of so-called "massive retaliation," which is often defined in such a way as to be easily criticized and refuted. Those who believe in counter force respond by charging that "finite deterrence" is really "minimum deterrence," and that its retaliatory strike consists solely of the inhuman bombing of cities. They go on to say that such deterrence can easily become less than minimum; it can lose its credibility and lead to no deterrence at all—an invitation to disaster.

It is obvious that the disputants over our military posture would approach any scheme for the actual reduction of arms from opposite ends of the scale. Those who feel that our general war capability is excessive would more readily agree to scrap some of our nuclear bombs and bombers, to build fewer missiles, and to put the money saved into conventional arms for limited wars. Those who feel that our general war capability is in a precarious state as a result of competitive factors and dynamic technology, would tend to argue for de-emphasizing conventional arms in order to reallocate resources where they are more seriously needed. To some extent this disagreement on military posture has apparently stood in the way of developing a coherent policy on arms control. But the effects of this disagreement have

recently become alleviated as more central direction of strategic programs has been developed in the Department of Defense. The disagreement, in any case, pertains more to means than to ends.

The important consideration is that the persons involved in making arms control policy—whether Army, Navy or Air Force, military or civilian, public official or private critic—now all tend to appreciate the necessity for serious evaluation of possible arms control schemes. Even though there may be disagreement about means, there is agreement that arms control is a valid national objective which may be successfully approached in cautious stages. This is an unprecedented reaction to an unprecedented danger. It gives cause for tentative hope that *real* progress toward arms control may be achieved.

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The various proposals and studies of arms control which arise out of these present circumstances can appropriately be described as the "functional" approach to arms control. The "functional" approach rests upon the acceptance of national self-interest as the governing motivation of nations. Currently, the basic assumption is that the U.S.S.R. and Communist China continue to be motivated by aggressive ambitions and that their goals in the long run have no limit short of an eventual world-wide communist society. In addition, it is assumed that no agreement with the Soviet Union or with Communist China is possible except where it is in their interest, and that no agreement can long be expected to survive conditions which are inimical to these communist powers.

Likewise, this approach assumes that the United States cannot tolerate any agreement that is based upon wishful thinking or that attributes "high motives" to communists. A ban on atomic weapons which is likely to be violated cannot be accepted indefinitely. Critical defenses must not be dismantled unilaterally or without proper safeguards.

The "functional" approach to arms control has its real meaning in relation to the military posture itself. When we accept communist ambition and national self-interest as a starting point, we are *limited to arms control measures which in themselves fit into the security posture of this country and contribute to that posture*. This means arms control which is workable, feasible, potentially effective, and which does not significantly degrade our military posture vis-a-vis that of the Soviet Bloc. Thus the proponents of "counterforce strategy" would likely advocate measures, such as inspection of the Soviet Union, which would enhance the ability of the United States

to locate and destroy, if need be, the strike forces of the Soviet Union. The proponents of "finite deterrence" would advocate measures which would reduce the requirement for additional nuclear strike forces, such as devices to help prevent a surprise attack by the Soviets. The point to be noted here is that the proponents of either strategy would support any measures which make a bona fide contribution to the overall security of the United States. There is more agreement than disagreement among military strategists about arms control, and the agreement lies in taking the "functional" approach. Any measure successfully taken, whether it be first or second priority, is better than none.

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The functional approach is implicit even in the popular use of the term "arms control" rather than "disarmament." The term "disarmament" for one thing has all the historical connotations of failure. In the current usage disarmament refers to a special kind of arms control, the formally agreed mutual reduction of weapons or armed forces, leading ultimately to their elimination except for internal security requirements. Such reduction may or may not be functional, that is, able to contribute to the security posture of both sides.

Within the confines of the functional approach to arms control, the policy-maker is guided by the general purpose of reducing the instability of relations between the rival forces, and hence reducing the risk of nuclear war. A problem arises, however, in determining whether a given measure for arms control will reduce the risk of war in its net effect. It may raise one kind of risk while reducing another, and the policy-maker has the difficult task of comparing risks. For example, in a voluntary ban on nuclear testing, the decision has to be made as to when the rising risk of being cheated exceeds the more general long-term risk associated with continuing nuclear weapons development.

Another complicating factor for the policy-maker is the need to evaluate the extent of mutual response in arms control. Although the essential ingredient of a functional arms control measure is self-interest, obviously an early limit is reached when steps are taken unilaterally without generating reciprocal steps by the other side. Unless the antagonist follows suit, with evidence that he has done so, the risks involved in successive arms control measures will rise in greater increments.

The present policy of the United States government apparently gives striking evidence of the functional approach. This policy regards the enhancement of our existing military security as a prerequisite to

any arms control agreement with the Soviet Union. The policy recognizes that military weakness is itself a prime cause of military instability and of the danger of war. The Soviets are not likely to accept arms control as being in their own interest unless they are confronted with considerable military power which is backed with the resolution to use it if necessary.

Functional arms control can involve actual preferences for certain new weapons and strategies which emphasize increased strength. For example, although we recognize the strictly military advantages which are obtainable in planning to strike first, the more costly and extensive military capability which is required for planning to strike second is preferred. The reason is to enhance stability: planning to strike second reduces the enemy temptation to strike first. Examples of programs which improve our second strike capability are the hardening of missile sites, the dispersal of our bomber force, and increasing the mobility of our retaliatory forces through the use of Polaris submarines.

Recent proposals for functional arms control fit into certain categories. Arms control measures, of course, may be either initiated unilaterally or negotiated. Unilateral measures are the simplest form, involving discrete steps, such as those described above, to improve stability and military security. However, since attitudes and actions of both sides help comprise the mutual deterrent posture, the degree and nature of mutual response soon become a vital factor in any progressive arms control scheme. The expected avenue for mutual action is diplomatic negotiation. This avenue is strongly rooted in historical experience; indeed, it is often the only available basis for exchange of views between the West and the Soviet Bloc. Nevertheless, in the functional view, successful negotiation on arms control must operate in the context of mutual self-interest. Therefore the real value of negotiation lies in the possibility of communication between antagonists seeking to identify their common interests. On the other hand, negotiation involves risks of losing in a bargaining situation. For these reasons, the nature of "bargaining" has been one of the most valuable objects of scholarly analysis leading toward arms control.

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One of the more dramatic types of arms control would emphasize the prevention of surprise attack by the provision of tactical warning. Such was President Eisenhower's "open skies" plan which presumably would have revealed any major preparations for an attack, or at least would have provided positive warning that an attack was under way. The

advent of large numbers of ballistic missiles renders this approach less effective. When the principal strike forces consist of missiles, it would be possible to warn of an attack in progress, but much more difficult to detect preparations for an attack. In fact, it is argued that "open skies" are particularly unpalatable to Russians because we would be aided in locating Soviet strike forces for targeting purposes—a favor we already grant to them in our own press.

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Another category of arms control proposals would reduce armaments which are of questionable or marginal value to both sides—actually a pseudo-disarmament scheme. This measure would serve the national self-interest. It would involve the saving of resources with relatively small risk because the penalty in case of enemy violation would be negligible. It also might promote military stability through reduced tension, although such an effect would be limited. An actual example of this type of arms control was the reduction in overall military manpower by the Soviet Union, announced in 1960 (and recently rescinded in part), following similar reductions by the U.S. We could call this the "throwaway" method, because it matters little whether the enemy follows suit. Other possibilities in this area lie in publicizing future reductions in manned aircraft or aircraft carriers as they become obsolete. A special version of the "throwaway" method is the announced cessation of nuclear tests on a unilateral basis immediately following completion of a series of tests. This the Soviets did, and they made propaganda gains during a lull in testing which was probably planned in any case.

Another kind of functional arms control is directed toward limiting the scale and scope of war, particularly toward preventing small nuclear wars from spreading or "escalating" beyond control into general war. In this proposal, each side would dismantle all nuclear weapons of intermediate size. Thus the difference between tactical and strategic bombs would be unmistakably clear to any belligerent and the likelihood of limited war escalating from small to large bombs would be correspondingly reduced. No enforcement of such an agreement would be necessary. In this case the sanction against using forbidden-size weapons, or even admitting to their existence, would be effective on the basis of national self-interest.

The most complex and perhaps the most realistic discussions of functional arms control have been by experts in this area who emphasize the hazards and limitations, as well as the benefits, of inspections.

No inspection system for nuclear weapons is guaranteed reliable; hence, some degree of violation by the Soviets is possible and must be assumed. In these conditions, as nuclear armaments are reduced toward zero, the military situation becomes potentially more unstable. If the prohibition were complete, a violation of only a few concealed weapons, say ten or twenty, would give a decisive advantage to the violator. There is, therefore, a theoretical minimum figure for agreed mutual reductions of nuclear weapons—say 500—which must be sufficient to render negligible the temptation to violate.

It also has been pointed out that there is an advantage for the potential aggressor in an inspection system. This is in the more complete intelligence on the strike forces of the defender given to the aggressor, intelligence which could conceivably make a surprise attack decisive. Consequently, inspection ought to be so limited as to prevent any such complete accumulation of intelligence. This could be done by an elaborate scheme for sanctuaries and limited inspections to keep the opposing strike capabilities between the upper and lower limits prescribed.

A great deal of study has been given to the possibilities for disarmament and inspection by zones, starting with non-strategic areas and adding zones step by step as mutual confidence and trust increases. On a scheme such as this the United States and the Soviet Union probably came closer to agreement in 1957 than at any other time in the history of their negotiations on arms control. The recent United States proposal for "spot-check" surprise inspection, rather than the more rigid methods, thus could be a major advance.

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Another recent and important example of the functional approach to arms control is the discussion and analysis of the projected state of affairs in a disarmed world, including incentives for, restraints against, and consequences of arms control violations. Analysis indicates that military security threats would still exist after disarmament, and that a kind of deterrent situation, similar to that regarding nuclear war, would exist regarding "cheating" and regarding open "rearmament" too if cheating is discovered. In this situation, the consequences of failure of the deterrent would not be so immediately drastic as nuclear war. However, the security of the West could be even more seriously threatened because this kind of deterrent could operate more strongly against democratic countries than against authoritarian governments, and the mutual military posture could be

much more unstable. This post-disarmament analysis, while not encouraging, helps equip the expert for evaluating specific arms control measures which would best serve our objectives in a disarmed or disarming world.

The ultimate in functional arms control may lie in collective military measures such as the several United Nations Emergency Forces we have seen in the past ten years. Admittedly, the Soviet Union is far from supporting such measures, and we are very far from furnishing nuclear weapons to the UN. But the next ten years will undoubtedly see the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Red China and others, and the "Nth Country" problem will be upon us. The risk of atomic war, accidental or deliberate, will, according to one theory, rise at an exponential rate. And so, we hope, will the sense of urgency to impose preventive measures. This situation may drive all nations, in their individual interests, to vest significant military power in a collective organization (but not to the extent of giving the international organization a monopoly of force). From the functional standpoint, when weapons are turned over to an enforcement agency the advantage is that the incentive to cheat on an arms reduction agreement and the penalty for not cheating are drastically reduced, dependent, of course, on the percentage of its arms each nation gives to the collective organization.

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There are obvious shortcomings in each of the proposed measures for arms control. Yet great strides have been made, considering that only a few years ago arms control was furthest removed from the active interest of the policy-makers. The United States

has recently proposed a comprehensive plan for eventual general and complete disarmament. Despite the meager chances for reaching agreement with the Soviets on so extensive a program at this time, our ability to produce such a plan, integrated with our national objectives, is very encouraging. Some of its elements are derived from the proposals of the community of scholars who devote their attention to national security policy. They have gained the attention of the military planners who at one time avoided this so-called "crackpot" business. Moreover, military planners themselves are now entering into arms control discussions and studies. This may be the most encouraging sign of all, for these are the professionals in matters of military security. Practical men are now viewing our requirements for survival from a practical standpoint. With apologies to Clemenceau, peace is too important to be preserved by statesmen alone.

In taking on the task of arms control, there is no solace for us in the history books, nor is there even a suggestion of a solution. The evidence of history is that war is likely to occur and that the best weapons tend to be used in all-out war. Bernard Brodie recently made a comment which is obvious but cogent. He pointed out that our recorded history is now about six thousand years old, and that if past performance is an indicator, it is difficult to conceive of the human race going on for a comparable period in the future without once pulling the stops on the kind of destructive orgy of which we are capable.

On the other hand the destructive power of nuclear weapons is without precedent. Perhaps we *shall* find a completely new measure of good sense and courage to deal with these weapons. The years which lie immediately ahead will probably give us the answer one way or another.

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