

THE NUCLEAR OBSESSION:

III. NONPROLIFERATION AND CHINA POLICY

Jack Walker

If the current U. S. desire to conclude a nuclear nonproliferation treaty with the Soviets raises some difficult questions with respect to future U. S. relationships with its allies (principally the Indians, Japanese, and Germans), it raises even more troublesome questions in connection with what many would regard as a highly desirable new objective of U. S. foreign policy. I would think it could be accepted as a verifiable fact that many of those who favor the nonproliferation treaty also favor, with equal or nearly equal vehemence, the "normalization" of relations between the U. S. and China. As this is written, the most recent expression of such a viewpoint is the proposal for a new "Two China" policy which could become the basis for the entry of China into the United Nations.

The considerable difficulties of realizing this outcome need not be analyzed here. What I intend to do in this essay is to consider how the conclusion of a nonproliferation treaty would tend to prevent the normalization of Sino-American relations.

For what it is worth, let me stake out a personal position on the issue of Sino-American relations and the entry of the Communist Chinese into the U.N. I happen to think that the latter is eminently desirable, and I think also that many additional steps might and should be taken which would bring China into a much more normal form of intercourse with the rest of the world community. Given the present world situation, I would also advocate giving to Communist China the permanent Security Council seat now occupied by Nationalist China. What is most disturbing is what I take to be the generalized failure to realize that a nonproliferation treaty (as currently described) is incompatible with the parallel objective of normalizing Sino-American relations.

Before analyzing the contradictions, let me attempt to make one additional point as clearly as possible. Admittedly, it is *not* a current objective of U. S. foreign policy to seat Communist China in the U.N. I would argue, however, that it is an objective of many of the

This is the third in a series of articles which began in the December issue of *worldview*. The author has long had a professional interest in military and political aspects of modern warfare.

individuals and groups in the U. S. which also advocate the nonproliferation treaty. I am arguing, then, that the Government is consistent, but incorrect; I am arguing also that the Government's loudest supporters (for nonproliferation) are inconsistent, and also incorrect. In an attempt to show why these assertions are valid, it is necessary to speculate about the situation that would exist *after* the conclusion of the nonproliferation treaty.

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The Contradictions. At the outset, it is necessary to assert that a nonproliferation treaty with the Soviets can be regarded only as a peculiar form of alliance between us and the Soviets, aimed largely at the Chinese and, to a lesser degree, the French and those U. S. allies likely to acquire nuclear arms within the next decade. While the nonproliferation treaty is not likely to affect the current Chinese nuclear development program, the treaty will indeed be viewed as an attempt to mobilize world opinion against that program. It stands to reason that the result will be only a further exacerbation of Sino-American relations, a further hardening of already rigid attitudes. Several possible future situations are worth further analysis.

Suppose, for example, that the treaty is concluded and that the Sino-Soviet rift deepens or remains about the way it is now. The treaty itself, especially if combined with the other agreements we are making with the Soviets (principally economic agreements), will be viewed by the Chinese as a further hardening of a U. S.-Soviet alliance directed against them. To whatever degree the nonproliferation treaty extends the current spirit of *détente*, it is almost bound to make it more difficult to "normalize" relations between the U. S. and China. As this is written, the Soviet attitude toward Chinese membership in the U.N. obviously has shifted from one of full-throated support to one of lukewarm repetition. With a nonproliferation treaty in effect, it can be expected that the U. S. position will harden further; we probably will attempt to insist that no nation be admitted to the U.N. until it agrees to sign the treaty.

This problem is compounded if one considers what probably will occur if, as the U. S. hopes, most of the

members of the U.N. agree to add their signatures to the treaty. Countries which might otherwise tend to encourage Chinese membership in the U.N. may well be motivated to insist that the Chinese adhere to the treaty before they be admitted to the U.N. If the Indians, for example, are to be expected to forego nuclear armaments, they will not look with favor upon apparent U.N. acceptance of China's armament. Other countries, moreover, may well insist that adherence to the treaty become a *sine qua non* for entry into the U.N. For vastly different reasons, then, a great many countries may well turn against Chinese entry. Those in this country who advocate it will find that they have only (1) provided a useful debating tactic for those in this country who oppose Chinese entry, and (2) reversed the thinking of countries which now advocate Chinese entry.

Suppose, on the other hand, that for reasons that none of us can foresee at this moment, a Sino-Soviet reconciliation comes about. This might happen for ideological reasons, or it might happen as an outcome of further escalation of the Vietnam war with neither the Chinese nor the Soviets able to pull away from continued support of the North Vietnamese. Should this occur, the result will bring about the problems mentioned in my previous essay. In a sense, the Soviets will gain a new ally already equipped with nuclear arms, while we will be forced to oppose those of our allies who consider nuclear arms necessary to their own defense. This will put the U. S. on the horns of an uncomfortable dilemma, and it might be predicted that we will have to withdraw from the treaty in the interest of arming our allies against a revived Sino-Soviet bloc. This will be quite damaging to our prestige. I would argue, therefore, that regardless of the future course of Sino-Soviet relations, the U. S. does not stand to gain from the nonproliferation treaty. But there is yet another dimension to this problem that needs to be mentioned.

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Carl T. Rowan, an observer who is quite sensitive to the interplay of foreign politics and crucial domestic issues, has only recently warned against the dangers of a "deal" between the U. S. and the Soviets that is directed principally against mutual fear of Chinese expansionism. Rowan, without referring at all to the nuclear question, points out that the U. S. already has shifted its propaganda stance so as to portray the Chinese as the "bogeymen" of the world while, at the same time, ignoring the history of Soviet expansionism in the interest of arranging "peace" with them. Rowan emphasizes the obvious facts of Soviet military and economic strength, and argues that for quite a few

years to come, only the Soviets will be able to finance an "ideological" assault against "Western imperialism." He goes on, however, to underline a more subtle possibility, namely that there are some aspects of a racial approach in U. S. attempts to arrive at agreements with the Soviets that are directed mainly against the Chinese. I would amend Rowan's argument so as to clearly include a nonproliferation treaty as a part of the overall U. S.-Soviet *détente*, and I would then agree with him that the overall result might well give the appearance of an all-white alliance directed against non-whites. I think it unnecessary to outline in detail how this would interact with some of the most serious domestic U. S. questions.

If the U. S. (and the U.N.) are to normalize relations with China, the wisest course would appear to be one which encourages Chinese membership on an "as is" basis. That means, in turn, that no additional barriers should be erected to that normalizing process. After all, it was the Korean War which solidified the current Sino-American dispute and which gave rise to the slogan "China cannot shoot her way into membership in the U.N." The nonproliferation treaty can be expected to produce only more slogans of that type.

I conclude, then, that the nuclear obsession, represented in this case by the all-out drive to conclude a nonproliferation treaty, works against the desire to pull the Chinese into the U.N. Yet, the groups which most strongly advocate the treaty appear to be the same as those advocating Chinese entry into the U.N., and it is not easy to figure out why this is the case. While I would conclude that the nuclear obsession is a phenomenon which often inhibits dispassionate thinking, I think I would argue also that the nonproliferation treaty's advocates fail to recognize that the treaty will amount to a peculiar form of "alliance," directed against those who do not now possess nuclear weapons. There are those, for example, who have argued that world peace could be made more secure if the U. S. and Soviets were to agree to destroy the emerging Chinese nuclear capacity. This has been known by such engaging titles as "coercive disarmament," "assertive disarmament," and "nuclear sterilization." And those who have urged such action, be it noted, have not been solely right-wing conservatives.

In any case, the point is that such extreme action would only be the logical result of a full-fledged nonproliferation alliance, as opposed to the exhortatory alliance currently in preparation. Whether the treaty be only "declaratory," as appears likely, or "action-oriented," as appears unlikely, the treaty is indeed a form of "alliance" and to look upon it that way is to understand why it will only harden opposition to Chinese entry into the U.N.