

Countercombatant Strategy: A New Balance of Terror?

Robert C. Johansen

Military planners, security-minded intellectuals and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger himself have been reexamining current nuclear strategy in light of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. As always, caution and skepticism are advisable in appraising new proposals for military strategy and even for arms control, since such proposals often encourage the arms race to continue unabated in new, more volatile areas.

Because of Schlesinger's public y announced intention to modify American nuclear policy, one strategic proposal receiving attention is Bruce Russett's suggestion, published two years ago in *Worldview* ("Short of Nuclear Madness," April, 1972), and in his contribution to *The Military-Industrial Complex: A Reassessment*, edited by Sam C. Sarkesian and Charles Moskos, that the United States should replace a countercity nuclear strategy with a countercombatant strategy. The latter would enable the United States to deter the Soviet Union, Russett argued, without destroying a large number of Soviet citizens if war occurred. Russett's ideas deserve further examination, because in January of this year Secretary Schlesinger advocated shifting the United States deterrent posture partly in the direction Russett favored; namely, targeting Soviet nuclear capability as part of American deterrence strategy. The purpose of this essay is to examine fundamental questions about Schlesinger's new direction and Russett's somewhat similar, but intellectually more sophisticated, proposed nuclear strategy.

Russett's and Schlesinger's discussions of their new strategies provide instructive examples of the chronic difficulties of retaining the nuclear deterrent in any form and at the same time substantially reducing the catastrophic consequences of using the deterrent. If those difficulties cannot be overcome, then such

proposals should be supplanted by more far-reaching and fundamental suggestions for strategic change. What follows is an analysis of these difficulties. In general, would the proposed strategy produce the positive results acclaimed for it? In particular, what effects would it have upon the arms race?

At the outset we should recall that a *countercity* strategy, which presently obtains in both the Soviet Union and the United States, targets the population centers of the opponent for massive destruction to deter the opponent from misbehaving. In contrast, *counterforce* strategy aims at the nuclear forces of the opponent and attempts to spare the population. But this strategy is likely to be destabilizing, because it creates apprehension that the United States could destroy the nuclear deterrent of any other country on the ground. In a moment of tension this could tempt the Soviet Union, for example, to launch a preemptive strike, and in time of peace it would stimulate the arms race as the Soviet Union attempted to lessen the American strategic lead. A *countercombatant* strategy, such as that proposed by Russett, emphasizes the intention of avoiding civilian casualties while attacking those military targets traditionally regarded as permissible in rules of warfare. The eligible targets here are not limited to nuclear forces as they are in counterforce strategy.

In his public statements, Schlesinger favored adding Soviet nuclear capability to the American list of targets, which previously emphasized cities. The purpose of the change, according to Schlesinger, is to enable the United States to engage in "limited" nuclear war. During such a war the United States could conduct a nuclear attack, for example, on some Soviet missiles, without launching a full-scale attack on all targets, both civilian and military, because an all-out attack would invite retaliation against American cities. Schlesinger's position is similar to both counterforce and countercombatant strategies in targeting Soviet nuclear capability, but

ROBERT C. JOHANSEN is Professor of International Relations at Manchester College, Indiana.

dissimilar to countercombatant and similar to counterforce strategies in retaining Soviet population centers as targets. Schlesinger later "clarified" and moderated his initial statement after critics argued he was moving toward a full counterforce strategy which would be destabilizing. His current position appears similar to countercombatant strategy in seeking to stop short of a counterforce capability designed to destroy Soviet nuclear capability in a single, massive strike.

The persuasiveness of both Schlesinger's and Russett's advocacy of a countercombatant strategy depends on demonstrating (1) that a countercombatant strategy is less undesirable and less destabilizing than a counterforce strategy and (2) that a countercombatant strategy provides better strategic options for the United States and is less costly in terms of human life than a counterforce strategy. In discussing the first comparison I shall attempt to show that there is little consequential advantage to a countercombatant strategy over a counterforce strategy. In examining the second comparison I shall argue that there also is not a clear practical advantage in terms of increased strategic options or decreased lethal consequences to a countercombatant strategy as opposed to a primarily counterforce strategy. In brief, although seeking to avoid the evils of both counterforce and counterforce strategies, countercombatant strategy (à la Russett or Schlesinger) instead combines some of the less desirable features of both.



First, one of the least compelling ideas undergirding a countercombatant strategy is that a government can implement such a strategy and at the same time avoid the destabilizing psychological and political consequences correctly associated with a first-strike or counterforce capability in which one government has deployed weapons so sophisticated and numerous as to enable the destruction of a large portion of the enemy's capability before it has a chance to retaliate. Whether it is possible for a government to have a countercombatant strategy without having a (presumably undesirable) counterforce capability depends on the strategic latitude between being able to destroy the enemy's ability to fight after a first strike (countercombatant strategy) and being able to destroy the enemy's deterrent before it strikes (counterforce strategy). I doubt that this is a sufficiently wide latitude to make meaningful distinctions with the relatively blunt weapons of nuclear power.

In my opinion Russett's statements themselves, at

different places in his analysis, call into question the assumption of easy distinction between counterforce and countercombatant strategies upon which his conclusions rest. In attempting to prove that a countercombatant strategy would in fact deter, Russett claims a hypothetical American nuclear retaliation would produce the following results in the Soviet Union: "Its tactical military capability, *as well as its strategic forces*, would be substantially gone" (emphasis added). Its "war-fighting capacity," he says, certainly would not survive. "The Soviet Union's ability to defend itself from its neighbors, *even the small and now much weaker states of Eastern Europe, would be destroyed*" (emphasis added). This, of course, sounds like even more sweeping destruction than would result from a counterforce strategy as traditionally understood.

But at another point, in arguing that a countercombatant strategy would not have the destabilizing effects of a first-strike or counterforce capability, he writes: ". . . the proposed countercombatant strategy in *no way* implies developing a force capable of delivering a first strike, and is not therefore destabilizing to the nuclear balance." ". . . strategic retaliatory vehicles are not necessarily the primary targets under a countercombatant strategy." In addition, the development of invulnerable retaliatory forces in the Soviet Union, such as submarine-launched missiles, ". . . is to be welcomed."

To be sure, because deterrence is psychological and relational, it is difficult to know precisely what is meant in saying that strategic forces are "substantially gone" and "war-fighting capacity" would be certainly destroyed. But if only the existing Soviet submarine nuclear capacity remained, that would be enough to destroy all major American cities and calls into question whether Soviet "war-fighting capacity" would in fact have been destroyed. By Russett's own logic, if it had survived, then the proposed strategy has failed to meet the fundamental requirements he establishes. The Soviet Union would still possess a weakened but relatively strong deterrent, and certainly its strategic forces would not be "substantially gone." On the other hand, if strategic forces have not survived in "substantial" numbers, then the countercombatant strategy clearly is dangerously similar to a destabilizing counterforce strategy. Such a strategy would place the enemy in an intensely insecure position, because its war-fighting capacity could be destroyed by the United States even after the United States had suffered a first strike.

If the United States could accomplish such destruction after suffering a first strike, it could clearly do so before a first strike—an alternative unlikely to escape a skeptical mind. In other words, the United States could use its nuclear forces to bring pressure against the Soviet Union, whether through diplomatic bargaining, a conventional war against the

Soviet Union or its allies, or even perhaps a preventive or preemptive nuclear confrontation itself. Therefore, a countercombatant strategy is similar in its political and psychological consequences to an admittedly undesirable counterforce strategy.

I stress that countercombatant strategy is similar to counterforce strategy in its destabilizing *political* and *psychological consequences*, because the pace of technology has, for the moment at least, placed a first-strike capability itself, strictly defined as a widely effective damage-limiting capability, beyond any government's grasp. Still, any movement toward such a strategy would stimulate counteractions from the opponent to offset superior forces that the latter state might fear could be used against it, either in diplomacy or war.

Neither Schlesinger nor Russett explains precisely how his strategy differs, if it does, from a similar strategy that the Pentagon once recognized as highly destabilizing. Only three years ago, when a Senate amendment called for development of "silo killer" warheads, a spokesman for the Department of Defense said: "It is the position of the United States to not develop a weapon system whose deployment could reasonably be construed by the Soviets as having a first-strike capability. Such a deployment might provide an incentive for the Soviets to strike first."



Second, in examining the possible responses of the Soviet Union to a countercombatant strategy, one sees further difficulties in making the necessary distinctions between countercombatant strategy and a combined counterforce-counterforce strategy. From the Soviet viewpoint, an American countercombatant strategy carries the danger that after the Soviet Union has been disarmed and has no capacity to defend itself as a result of United States retaliation, then Soviet cities might be picked off with impunity, or at least the threat to do so would be utilized in negotiations until "surrender" conditions had been agreed upon. One hesitates to generalize from the case of American bombing in North Vietnam in December, 1972, but surely it provides an example of a superpower, itself threatened in no important way, using explosive power against civilian and military installations, possibly even seeking "bonus value," as a way of influencing diplomatic negotiations.

After witnessing the B-52 saturation bombing of Vietnamese urban centers by the United States, Russett's statement is hardly convincing: "... saturation bombing, deliberate aerial bombardment of resi-

dential areas, or use of larger bombs than were strictly necessary to destroy the military target would be condemned." To be sure, these acts would be condemned, but by whom and to what effect? There is no assurance that condemnation by humanitarians would have any more effect in restricting the ruthlessness demonstrated by the leaders of the great powers than humanitarian urgings have had in preventing the establishment of nuclear deterrence in the first place. Surely one cannot expect Soviet strategists to limit their defense planning in the hope that such condemnations would restrict U.S. bombing to nonresidential areas.

Therefore, because political rivals of the United States would see a countercombatant strategy as only the first step toward a counterforce strategy if the United States did not get its way in negotiations, and because there is no dependable assurance that the United States would limit its strikes to combatants, opponents of the United States would probably not modify their strategies significantly. They would try, that is, to prepare for defense and for offense against both counterforce and counterforce strategies, even if United States strategy was in fact countercombatant. Perhaps Schlesinger has been more accurate than Russett in sensing that in practice assurances that a country will not attack cities just because it has the more sophisticated capacity to attack its opponent's missiles are undependable. If so, in terms of weapon procurement and the opponent's strategic doctrine, the difference between the Schlesinger and Russett positions all but disappears.



Third, it is not clear that the recipient of U.S. retaliation will as easily distinguish a countercombatant from a counterforce strategy as the country ordering the retaliation; yet it is essential that the recipient understands and believes the strategy is countercombatant, or the recipient will be unlikely to refrain from attacking United States cities in *either* a first or second strike. To insure this recognition of difference between countercombatant and counterforce strategies before a war is nearly impossible. Since a countercombatant strategy differs from a counterforce strategy primarily in limited intention rather than limited capability (indeed countercombatant strategy requires more massive arsenals), the enemy would always fear the strategy could be counterforce and plan accordingly.

After a nuclear war is under way, even empirically oriented officials in the Soviet Union are likely to find the consequences of a countercombatant strategy unclear. Hundreds of thousands of persons

would be killed if, as Russett explains, the following are included as targets: ". . . missile silos, military airbases, nuclear submarines and submarine bases, air-defense and ABM systems, . . . weapons-oriented atomic energy plants, . . . internal security forces, all military bases of any kind, . . . transport facilities devoted primarily to the movement of troops and military supplies . . .," and manufacturing plants and their employees engaged in defense-related work. These targets are, of course, far more inclusive than the original understanding of counterforce strategy, which was aimed at destroying merely the nuclear capability of the enemy. How can these targets be destroyed without causing massive devastation that, at the least, might confuse the recipient about whether "civilians" were being deliberately, although selectively, killed? The relatively small-scale bombing (relative, that is, to nuclear attack) against Hanoi and Haiphong in December, 1972, illustrates the nearly impossible expectation that the recipient nation be spared massive civilian damage. And if the attack merely *appears* to the victim to be against its population or a portion of it, there would not be in the mind of the victim the same clear, essential distinction made between countercombatant and countercity strategy that there is in the mind of the initiator of a countercombatant strike. Without that distinction, the opponent would be invited to retaliate against American cities, and a countercity war would result.

Furthermore, Russett contends that, unlike countercity strategy, countercombatant strategy does not depend on using the inhabitants of cities as hostages. But do such inhabitants not in fact play that same role when he argues that one reason the state receiving a countercombatant strike would not respond with its own remaining nuclear forces is the desire not to have its cities destroyed? A countercombatant strategy is countercity strategy one step away, because after a countercombatant strike the populations *are* being held hostage against further attacks.



Fourth, countercombatant strategy unrealistically depends on stopping Soviet aggression by making the Kremlin vulnerable to the forces of domestic revolution or to attack by neighboring states. In discussing conditions that would exist in the Soviet Union after it had hypothetically provoked American countercombatant retaliation, Russett writes: "The great majority of Russia's population, even the urban population, even of Russia's non-military industrial capacity, would survive. But its war-fighting capacity, and its capability for *using*

force to maintain internal order, most certainly would not" (emphasis added). Russett explains: "A key element of a countercombatant strategy . . . is to reduce greatly the Russian's ability to . . . control their own citizens." Any remaining Soviet nuclear forces ". . . would be useless against internal dissent. . . ." Does Russett seriously believe that Russian citizens will rise up against their own government in a moment of such crisis? Does the existing Soviet government in fact enjoy such little support and popularity among its citizens that there is a reasonable expectation that the Kremlin would be paralyzed because of domestic upheaval? At that moment of crisis, would not national morale, unity and support for the only viable Soviet government increase? Moreover, if a majority of the population is unharmed, why would Soviet police forces, presumably a factor in maintaining internal order, be eliminated to such an extent to justify the conclusion that the capability of preserving order certainly would not remain?

A similar, threatening role against the Kremlin is ascribed to the countries bordering on the Soviet Union: "The Soviet Union's ability to defend itself from its neighbors, even the small and now much weaker states of Eastern Europe, would be destroyed. To make this particularly painful the United States might strike, with special care, Russian bases and armed forces along the Chinese border. In effect, the penalty for a Soviet attack on the West would be Soviet impotence vis-à-vis their Asian neighbor." Again, "A key element of a countercombatant strategy . . . is greatly reducing the Russian's ability to deter the Chinese. . . ." Are American officials to assume in their planning that, after a major nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, Moscow's former East European allies would suddenly launch an attack on the Soviet Union? Or are we to believe that China has the capability, to say nothing of the intention, of launching an invasion and occupation of the Soviet Union? I am doubtful these arguments would be viewed as dependable predictions for American defense-planners who might consider a countercombatant proposal. Thus they would refuse to uncouple a strategy to target cities from a strategy to target Soviet military capability. Schlesinger's current preference for adding countercombatant strategy while retaining countercity strategy substantiates this conclusion.

Finally, it is debatable whether the U.S. could force the USSR to submit to our wishes without occupation.* But if the United States began to occupy the Soviet Union, the latter might threaten or use its remaining nuclear forces (depend-

* Examples of this problem are as diverse as, for example, Russian refusal to surrender to Napoleon and North Vietnam's refusal to surrender to the United States in recent years.

ing on how many were left intact) against the United States. If the Soviet Union had such forces and they were used at the moment of American invasion and occupation, I suspect that most of the Soviet population would stand with the Kremlin in so doing. If the Soviet Union would lack such forces, then countercombatant strategy is close to a counterforce capability in disguise.



What are the probable effects of a countercombatant strategy upon the arms race? As suggested above, the psychological and political consequences of both Schlesinger's and Russett's countercombatant strategies are in several ways similar to those of a counterforce or first-strike strategy, which is now widely assumed to be destabilizing because it would stimulate the opponent to construct additional offensive weapons to offset its rival's ability to destroy much of its existing deterrent in a first strike. This is one of the most convincing reasons for rejecting a counterforce strategy, which Schlesinger and Russett both recognize, and it could be a compelling reason for questioning countercombatant strategy as well.

For an American countercombatant strategy not to exacerbate the arms race, the Soviet Union must be willing, without constructing additional weapons, to allow the United States to deploy a nuclear force that exceeds in quantity and quality the number of weapons previously possessed to maintain a counter-city deterrent. On the other hand, if Soviet leaders would respond in kind to the American policy, then the Soviet deterrent would also be increased in size and sophistication. One might speculate in such an event that the United States would construct additional weapons to destroy the new Soviet weapons in order to insure an effective second-strike capability. The arms race would thus continue its upward spiral.

Such a countercombatant strategy might be as likely to stimulate the arms race as a counterforce capability. For example, a countercombatant strategy today would probably require more weapons to execute the destruction that Russett has described than would have been required merely to attack the Soviet nuclear deterrent of the 1960's which was the goal of Robert McNamara's abortive effort to develop a counterforce strategy. A counterforce strategy seeks to destroy the enemy's strategic ability to attack; in contrast, a countercombatant strategy seeks to destroy the enemy's ability to defend itself,

even from conventional attack. Since, in an age of deterrence, ability to defend includes capacity to deter and therefore to attack, any preparations designed to destroy an enemy's ability to defend itself necessarily include substantial capacity for destruction of ability to attack, which is, of course, a goal of counterforce strategy.

The extent to which countercombatant strategy differs from counterforce strategy depends in part on the number of strategic weapons that the retaliatory state decides to leave intact. If merely *most*, instead of *all*, Soviet war-fighting capacity is to be destroyed, still the difference between countercombatant and counterforce strategies is more one of intention than of capability. But this situation also would encourage the enemy to escalate the arms race to achieve parity in capability, since intention is never stable nor calculations about it dependable.

In contrast to the above assessment of consequences flowing from a countercombatant strategy, Russett doubts that the Russians would try, with additional weapons or other measures, to counteract or nullify an American countercombatant posture, because such efforts would lead back to a less desirable (from the Soviet viewpoint) American policy of retaliation against both Soviet forces and Soviet cities. However, in my opinion, the reason the Soviet Union might enlarge its forces could be that Kremlin leaders would seek not to train United States missiles on Moscow and Leningrad, but instead to develop a capacity to defend themselves or to deter further attacks after they had suffered a first strike.

We must remember that the "logic" of arms races is far removed from the logic of the intellectual: Soviet leaders are not likely to tolerate a situation in which their own nuclear capacity is substantially less than that of the United States, even if defense intellectuals point out that to seek parity may increase the likelihood that their cities would be devastated in time of war. From the Soviet leaders' viewpoint the achievement of parity represents a gain without loss: Since they know that *they* are not planning any nuclear aggression, if the United States purpose is purely defensive, Soviet cities will never be attacked anyway. But if United States intentions are politically or militarily expansionistic, then what has the Soviet Union to gain by deliberately retaining an inferior deterrent? Nothing at all, since Soviet leaders would lose regardless of whether they launched a first or second strike. But if they sought to counteract the United States posture, there would be a psychological security in knowing that the Kremlin had everything the White House possessed. Thus the arms race would be likely to continue indefinitely.

A second flaw in the analyses of Russett and Schlesinger seems at some points almost to assume that arms competition is static. Thus they expect that Soviet leadership might not try to counteract

a United States countercombatant strategy, but simply accept it and hope for the best. However, since the arms race is a dynamic, ongoing process, the Kremlin knows that if the United States developed a countercombatant strategy today, the United States would be closer than the Soviet Union to a possible first-strike capability for victory tomorrow. Because of the possibility of unforeseen technological breakthroughs which might place the United States in a far superior position, the Soviet leaders would be unlikely to tolerate a United States lead, even if they knew that to try to catch up might increase the likelihood of destroyed Russian cities in a war in the immediate future. Even without such breakthroughs, a superior American deterrent in the meantime could make it more difficult for the Soviet government to defend itself diplomatically or militarily even before a first strike.



The uneasiness with which the Soviet leadership would receive news of an American countercombatant strategy can easily be understood by contemplating how American defense-planners would react to the knowledge that the Soviet Union was developing a nuclear force to destroy nearly all of America's tactical and strategic military capability, its internal security forces, its military transportation and communication networks, its submarine bases, its overseas bases, the industries that have substantial defense contracts, and the persons employed in them—all targets for a countercombatant strategy. And that the Soviet capacity would be great enough to do that not only in a first strike, but after suffering a first strike. I suspect that failure to try to equal such a Soviet force would be viewed as a position of surrender by United States national-security managers. To reiterate, the logic of the arms race is not the logic of the intellectual.

In examining another example from the Soviet perspective, it is doubtful that the Russians would prefer to buy protection for their cities at the risk of exposing their deterrent because they had deliberately sought not to equal the sophistication of American weapons. I expect that Soviet (or American) leaders would tolerate an inferior deterrent for themselves if they had limited technology or budget, but not because they desired to save their cities by having a vulnerable deterrent. On the other hand, if the Soviet Union sought an invulnerable deterrent with a disarming capacity equivalent to an American countercombatant posture, would not the arms race vigorously proceed, since more than one warhead is required to insure destruction of each enemy warhead?

A possible third flaw is the assumption that the United States will not exacerbate the arms race before a war begins by declaring beforehand its intention to control Soviet behavior in event of nuclear war. Although the United States would try to avoid a counter-city posture, if during war the United States could not control Soviet behavior according to its wishes, then even a counter-city strategy would probably be used. To a Soviet official this picture must look much less generous than to an American, because it means the United States would do whatever it thought "necessary" to achieve "victory." The main difference between a counter-city and countercombatant strategy from a Soviet perspective is that the United States would, with the latter, have the capacity not only to destroy Soviet cities but also Soviet defensive military capability. Once again, we must remember, the Soviet leaders will not be viewing United States strategy from the perspective that *they* are themselves contemplating aggressive war. Thus countercombatant strategy could appear more threatening to Soviet leadership than counter-city strategy.

Fourth, even if the countercombatant strategy were not undesirable, it would hardly offer a substantially better set of options for the United States than is provided by the existing deterrent. Recognizing that the purpose of countercombatant strategy is not a first strike, one can envisage countercombatant strategy being used in this way: Assume the Soviet Union has attacked the United States because it does not expect the United States can or will retaliate. A countercombatant strategy would demonstrate that the United States would in fact retaliate, and its response in effect would disarm the Soviet Union, but allegedly without the widespread killing of a counter-city attack. However, the countercombatant strategy is unnecessary, because with the existing deterrent Washington could communicate precisely the same message—that the United States would retaliate—by firing a few nuclear weapons to places of low population density or on targets that are strictly military, meanwhile withholding but perhaps threatening a full-scale counter-city attack. If it chose to do so, the United States could always send more missiles, with more destruction, in case the Kremlin missed the message at first. Why would this not work as well as Russett's proposal and at the same time avoid the escalatory potential of countercombatant strategy?

One answer to this question might be that to pursue the strategy of the preceding paragraph would not totally disarm the Soviet Union in a single blow, which would have obvious disadvantages. That is true, but one cannot claim that the United States could accomplish that destruction even *with* a countercombatant strategy without admitting that the United States posture would be approaching counterforce capability. Either the advocate of a counter-

combatant strategy must recognize that the U.S. position would begin to approach a first-strike potential or the advocate cannot argue that the United States would be able to destroy the war-fighting capacity of the Soviet Union by retaliation. If such sweeping, forcible disarmament is not achieved, then the above strategy of limited response with existing weapons would produce nearly the same results and still avoid the effects of exacerbating the arms race. Thus, even if not undesirable, countercombatant strategy is unnecessary to accomplish its proclaimed purpose of limited response.



This critique of countercombatant strategy suggests several hypotheses about arms control that deserve further study. First, efforts at nuclear arms control are likely to be counterproductive if they seek to decrease killing in event of war by increasing the number of weapons available to enable a more sophisticated deterrent strategy. This is true because the government with the less sophisticated deterrent worries more about its enemy's superior capability (such as countercombatant strategy) than about deaths in its own population. For national governments, population is expendable for protection of power. If it were not so, deterrence in any form would never have been tolerable.

Second, a commitment to no first use of nuclear weapons and irreversible controls on triggering devices to prevent first use of nuclear weapons would stabilize the arms race more than a countercombatant strategy by itself. If feasible, such controls would make a countercombatant strategy more desirable. The most promising way of maintaining a distinction between counterforce and countercombatant strategies would be a certain and irrevocable device to insure delay in firing missiles. Thus the opponent could be assured during the preparations of more sophisticated weapons that they would be incapable of rapid response or preemptive use, even though

they would be available for delayed countercombatant use.

Third, zonal demilitarization could be attempted as a way of protecting populations from destruction. In such zones there would be no confusion about distinguishing a counterforce from a countercombatant attack, because in those areas there would be no weapons and there would be a mutual agreement to avoid such areas in attack.

Fourth, the stabilizing consequences should be explored further for a strategic position based on Russett's candid comment: "I think I would prefer the complete abandonment of any American intention to strike civilians deliberately, on the ground that it is unjust to punish civilians (including children) for acts of their government."

Finally, arms control measures should be sought that are mutually reinforcing with a commitment to strengthening transnational and supranational loyalties and institutions as a way of eventually eliminating not merely nuclear weapons from national arsenals but national arsenals themselves.



Russett has performed a service in explaining that deterrence may be effective without requiring cities to be the targets of the first instance if war should break out. Also, the moral sensitivity that moves him to reject a counterforce deterrent and seek less ruthless defense strategies is a hopeful sign of concern from an influential scholar. Such concern is not an apparently important part of the Schlesinger proposal. If my doubts and criticisms are ill-founded, and if a countercombatant strategy could be established without stimulating the arms race, surely the moral superiority of destroying an opponent's defenses instead of destroying an opponent's population is beyond question. If, on the other hand, my fears are well-founded, then the United States should, with a greater sense of urgency than it has displayed, take more drastic steps to build a system of world public order in which nations eventually will no longer depend on violent self-help as a guarantor of security.