materials, and breakdown of traditional reliance upon institutions like the family, the church, and the law.

These principles deprive us of the comfort of defending preconceptions of "world order"; they make a farce of ideology. Still, through respecting them—each of which has the moral weight of subordinating strictly individual or national interest to calculations of what serves common purpose—we can bring in sight a new system, evolving through pragmatic action. "World order" was perverse morality, and none should mourn its demise; but a world order may be what a principled United States can help to create.

Reader's Response II

Ethics and Nuclear Politics

Ronald Stone

Professor Alan Geyer's report on the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference is authoritative ("The Nuclear Question Explodes," *Worldview*, September, 1975). His analysis of the ineffectiveness of the Non-governmental Organizational Council and the blindness of the Ford-Kissinger-Schlesinger Administration to the importance of the NPT is convincing. Professor Geyer is among the most creative and capable of those working in peace studies, and the substance of the article is valuable.

The one italicized sentence in Geyer's essay is: *In a world infused by an increasing vigorous ethos of egalitarian nationalisms the satisfaction of claims to equity is a matter of political realism*. Equality is not a self-sufficient principle in political ethics. Satisfaction of equity may be realistic, even though I doubt it, but it certainly would not be good political ethics. Equity must always be balanced by consideration of the capacities of the political actors and in the light of the definition of the common good of those negotiating a political settlement. The madness of the U.S.-USSR nuclear arms race needs to be criticized by the corruption of the national lives of both powers resultant from that buildup, and by the deleterious effects of that armament on world order. In any case, the analysis has to go beyond criticism from a perspective of equality. A claim for Honduras to equity in nuclear weaponry with the Soviet Union is ridiculous, and the search for an ethics of disarmament will not be furthered by moral language that implies such an argument should be taken seriously.

Geyer's suggestion in the conclusion that "ethics must begin with politics in matters of disarmament and almost everything else" could use restating. I wonder if he would be satisfied with the assertion that "Ethics and politics, though having their own vocabulary and method, must be correlated to avoid cynicism or idealism...."

A political analysis of the issue points to the conclusion that Kissinger's expertise in nuclear weapons theory may not extend to the establishment of a priority for controlling the expansion of armaments. Ford, of course, knows very little about nuclear weapons and is unwilling to spend money on welfare that he can spend on guns, even when the increased weapons provide no more security. The removal of Schlesinger may point toward a victory for Kissinger's philosophy of détente, but the push for the goals of the NPT is simply not in this Administration.

The value perspective of the Chief of State and his advisors is of central importance in any change in nuclear policy. Therefore, the President's predilection to spend the rest of his Administration's time on the campaign trail locates the field of action. If one wants to change the direction of U.S. policy vis-à-vis NPT, the single most important course of action is to defeat the Administration at the polls. Part of that effort needs to be the articulation of administrative failures in foreign policy in the vital areas of food, energy, and armaments. Ford's replacement by a statesman of the sensitivity of any one of the Democratic senators mentioned in Geyer's article [Hubert Humphrey, George McGovern, Edward M. Kennedy] is the priority for changing U.S. policy in this area.

It also seems that the essay needs a model of how nations under the pressures of rising nationalisms can relate to the NPT. The internal and immediate external relations of India, Pakistan, Japan, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina are more important to the questions of nuclear armaments than the Soviet-U.S. refusal to live up to Article VI of the NPT. The U.S. can now unilaterally affect the Israel-Egypt question and perhaps Brazil-Argentina. A common U.S.-USSR stand could already dictate the arming of the Subcontinent. In any case, the primary factors for those countries are beyond the U.S.-USSR arms rivalry and the formalities of treaty-making. Without mutuality of immediate interests, arms control steps proceed haltingly and perhaps uselessly.

A theological issue could also be raised. Geyer, as a churchman, and one of the most creative in the realm of international affairs, pleads for the churches to respond to the issues of the NPT and nuclear armaments in general. The churches have failed in this arena. Is it not possible that God is working through other agencies in this struggle? Moral pleading with the churches here is probably useless and just encourages guilt. God works through all institutions, and possibly Geyer's own base in the university shows where the action is on this issue. The secular agencies, sometimes leavened by religiously sensitive people, will carry the weight on this issue. The churches as such do not care about nuclear weapons, and it is quite proper theologically to look hopefully to God's work in those institutions and in those people who do care.

RONALD STONE is Professor of Social Ethics at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Theodore R. Weber

Alan Geyer's eloquent and justifiably angry report on the frustrations and relative invisibility of Non-Proliferation Treaty review helpfully informs, chastises, and arouses the reader—as it was intended to do. Yet both his analysis and the conference process rest on certain assumptions that, because they are erroneous, produced a distorting framework for interpretation and action.

1. The first assumption is that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is, or at least ought to be, the priority issue in the foreign policies of all states. When the treaty was first proposed, this assumption came to expression in much of the rhetoric of advocacy. When the treaty came up for review, the assumption undergirded the demands for taking it more seriously, strengthening its expectations and sanctions, and making it more inclusive. While the treaty remains in force, it seemingly provides the moral basis for insisting that its ratifiers honor the treaty-defined obligations over other competing claims.

But governments in their policy-making and implementation do not normally operate on this assumption, however seriously they may take the "nuclear crisis." They may hold the priority question open, allowing that some values in their package of commitments may be higher than the value of peace, that some prospective losses would be—to them, at least—disproportionately greater than the losses of nuclear war. If they close the priority question, they close it on some value so compelling to them as to conclude in advance the questions of means and consequences. Or they may give top priority to nuclear war avoidance, but assign it a risk factor sufficiently low to dilute the imperative for developing control mechanisms and accepting their limitations.

Both the United States and the USSR could have declined to develop their nuclear arsenals. Both certainly are aware of what an awesome catastrophe war between the two of them would be. But both have armed themselves with the technological ultimates because they have given priority to other values than safety from nuclear destruction, and because they are taking calculated yet incalculable risks. Some Israelis and supporters of Israel have stated unequivocally that if the cost of survival for Israel is the use of nuclear weapons for defense and even the risk of precipitating war between the Superpowers, they will do what is necessary to survive. That position implies no callous attitude toward the consequences for others. It is a declaration of a priority that transcends peace and other human values. The reciprocity in that situation is implied (although not in its entirety) in Geyer's report that "Egypt has signed, but won't ratify until Israel does." And if we consider the two egomaniacs who preside over the two parts of Korea, we surely cannot imagine that they would let the risks—especially to others—of nuclear war stand in the way of their personal and national ambitions for the reunification of Korea under their own domination.

Certainly this critique of the assumption would not strike Geyer as a novel insight. He makes the same point when, having elevated the treaty as "a veritable covenant for human survival, development, and peace," he adds, "which is not to say that the Ford Administration *or any other government* actually accords such a priority to the NPT" (emphasis added). Moreover, his several references to political realism in a national interest context underscore his awareness of governmental reservations of freedom of action. However, the main thrust of his analysis proceeds on the assumption to which we have pointed. Had he worked with more open-ended political realist assumptions, his treatment of the problem would have been notably different.

2. The second assumption is that the hostile stance of the United States and the USSR toward demands that they honor the "balance of obligations" of the NPT is to be understood primarily as a joint effort to maintain their superiority in power over the nonnuclear powers. It is significant in this regard that appeals and demands are addressed to the nuclear powers *as a class*. There is, of course, much truth in the assumption. The two Superpowers do want to keep the central management of international politics in their own hands, as far as possible. But it is even more true that the primary concern of the giants is with their relationship to each other. Their struggle for at least parity if not predominance vis-à-vis one another has a dynamic of its own that is caught up in the problem of nuclear proliferation but by no means comprehended by it.

Geyer writes: "Strange contrast, this: collusion in Geneva and outer space; resurgence of nuclear arms rivalry." But there is nothing strange about it if one is not caught up in the distortion of the second assumption. Nuclear arms rivalry is their preoccupation. Collusion in Geneva is an alliance of convenience whose purpose is to maintain freedom for the rivalry. Collusion in outer space is several things: a public relations gimmick, a means of keeping the rivalry from overheating, a manifestation of their self-understanding as world leaders.

It is both understandable and just that weaker states should want to establish or increase their autonomy over against the dominant powers. But it is dangerous in the extreme to insist that the nuclear crisis, like world politics in its entirety, must be dealt with primarily in the context of the strong versus the weak, and not in that of the strong versus the strong. Had Geyer and others in the review conference conceded the centrality of power competition between the U.S. and the USSR, they could have come up with a better explanation of the arrogant and muscular attitude these powers displayed toward the conference. Also, they would have been better positioned for constructive recommendations. But they would have had to admit that the NPT could not serve as the comprehensive "political and ethical framework for coping with nuclear questions."

3. The third assumption is that the NPT is the relational reality of a new international order, not fully present, but sufficiently present to establish some degree of authority and transcendence over the constitutive states. Geyer uses explicit covenantal language to characterize the treaty. Although in legal language "covenant" and "contract" may be interchangeable words, in theological language they are not. "Covenant" is a far stronger word. It signifies a relationship much more binding, more inclu-

---

THEODORE R. WEBER is Professor of Social Ethics at Emory University.

sive of the total life of the covenanting partners, more open-ended in its expectations than can be comprehended by the concept "contract." And Geyer surely is speaking theological rather than legal language in this context. When he refers to a "solemn bargain" and to a "balance of obligations," there can be little doubt that he perceives something of the quality of sanctity in the relationships of the NPT as covenant. However, the sanctity is functional. It hallows the relationships in order to establish their authority as the corporate framework of international interaction and to confer solemnity on promises to be kept, obligations to be fulfilled.

Do the ratifying states perceive the treaty in the same manner? Certainly the nuclear powers, including nonparticipants France and China, do not. For them the treaty is what treaties always have been—instruments of national policy that formalize agreements based on commonality of interest and *quid pro quo*. But despite the camouflage of moral rhetoric the nonnuclear powers clearly view the treaty in the same formal terms. For them it is an instrument whereby they can limit the power of the giants, enhance their own prestige through recognition, and spare themselves the costs and risks of nuclear armament while at the same time bargaining for security guarantees from the nuclear powers. Geyer lists India, Pakistan, Japan, Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Brazil, and Argentina as significant holdouts. He writes: "These are all critical threshold countries in areas of regional rivalry and tension." Can anyone doubt that they evaluate the decision to join the treaty group with reference to its implications for coping with the regional rivalry and tension? If they joined, and subsequently found it to be a hindrance to their coping, would they nonetheless accede to the covenantal obligations of the new international order?

A true covenant among states cannot come into existence unless at least one of two conditions is present: (a) historic relationships of sufficient depth, scope, and substance to sustain the covenant and support its authority; (b) an interest or set of interests commonly held and commonly agreed to be so compelling as to override competing particular claims. The first condition clearly does not exist in international society. And our preceding analysis has demonstrated that limiting the spread of nuclear weapons is not an interest that meets the criteria of the second. Whatever our own desires, we should acknowledge that states in international society view the NPT primarily not as a covenantal bond but as an instrument of national policy.

With a different view of political reality emerging out of the critique of these assumptions, what should be the thrust of practical proposals? Certainly not toward the "Chinese solution"—to which Geyer, much to my astonishment, admits he can find no good answer. The main argument of that "solution" is that universalizing the holdings of nuclear weapons would place more controls on the Superpowers. It would not. To the contrary, it would heighten their anxieties and increase their temptations to interventionism. Moreover, it would exacerbate conflicts among smaller powers and provide more access to nuclear weapons for political terrorists. We should note, also, that the proposal rests on the second erroneous assumption, namely, that the collusive behavior of the giants is based on a primary common concern to dominate smaller powers, and not on a primary concern to create freedom for their own rivalry. The "Chinese solution," if pressed, might well create the problem it is designed to avoid. That is, it might encourage the United States and the Soviet Union to draw closer together both for protection and for the more effective exercise of power.

A much more practical course would be for the nonnuclear powers to attempt to defuse the anxiety that generates the armaments rivalry between the two Superpowers. At the risk of being accused of Goldwaterism vintage 1964, I would suggest that the lesser powers reverse their usual practice and apply pressure primarily on the Soviet Union rather than on the United States. One reason for this suggestion is that the U.S. defense budget is highly vulnerable because of the condition of the domestic economy. No Administration could sustain a case for higher or even level defense expenditures in the face of a significant and credible cutback by the Soviet Union. Another reason is that the recent escalating moves have been provoked by the USSR—Geyer's revisionist views to the contrary notwithstanding. The U.S. has done its share of provoking, but the firing of Defense Secretary Schlesinger is a good clue to where the action is. These states have not hesitated in the past to apply heavy pressure against the United States for its adventures in Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, and elsewhere. Why should they now pass up the opportunity to restrain great power rivalries by, for example, combining their efforts to insist that the Soviet Union terminate its intervention in Angola?

Near the conclusion of his article Geyer states that "ethics must begin with politics in matters of disarmament and almost everything else." Unfortunately, all that he meant by that statement was that a particular "ethical" approach to politics must build up a strong supporting constituency in order to have the power to contend against alternative proposals and, it is to be hoped, impose itself on policy. What he ought to have meant was that ethical analysis leading to policy proposals should study the political actors in their interaction to discover what patterns of moral thinking and what particular moral commitments have real authority in the decision-making process. Had he opted for that meaning and for that procedure in political ethics, he would have looked more carefully for the actual operational or "working" ethic of the process, and in consequence might not have allowed his arguments to be shaped by the assumptions discussed above.

For Professor Geyer the ethic of the treaty process was, as we have suggested, a covenantal ethic. Its substance is the "balance of obligations." Its operational principles are promise-keeping ("good faith") and equity—principles intended to mitigate the imbalance of power between nuclear and nonnuclear states and the correlative *de facto* discrimination recognized in the treaty. But was the covenantal ethic in fact the "working" ethic of the process? Our analysis of the assumptions indicates clearly that it was not. The ethic that effectively guided and determined decisions was an ethic of the primacy of national loyalty expressed in commitments to pursue state interests. Its structure was teleological rather than relational; that is, it was concerned with relating means to ends rather than with identifying justifiable

expectations. The treaty was assessed within the ends-means framework for its implications for national interest. It was not itself the framework of judgment.

We do not conclude from this interpretation that the United States and the USSR are to be excused from the charges of bad faith and insensitivity on the grounds that they were faithfully following their "working" ethic. They had, in fact, made "solemn bargains," and these bargains are not simply to be dismissed by the observation that perhaps they should not have been made. Moreover, as Geyer rightly points out, their insensitivity is stupid from the perspective of political realism (i.e., their "working" ethic) just as it is obnoxious from the perspective of concern for justice.

Nor do we conclude that the "working" ethic of national interest ought to be accepted as normative and the covenantal ethic set aside. The covenantal ethic is the normative framework for reshaping the understanding of moral relatedness in international politics, but it cannot be thrust upon the states with claims to an authority over their values and actions it does not in fact possess. It is coeval with the emergence of sociologically significant international community. No—more than that. It rises to authority in reciprocity with emergent international community, for the two interact to produce both the ethos and the fabric of transformed relationships. We must foster those developments, but at the same time we must seek to influence the behavior of states with reference to their actual commitments and in the clear light of their real conflicts, and not solely or even primarily in the anticipation of what we should like them to become.

Alan Geyer Responds:

There may be some irony in a political scientist's being exhorted to political realism by two seminary professors. The truth is that Professors Stone and Weber and I share, I think, equal concern for both political realism and ethical vitality.

I'm surprised that Ronald Stone should identify *equity* with *equality* in a literal, numerical sense. Nobody expects Honduras to be the military equal of the Soviet Union. But any country that renounces nuclear weapons altogether (especially under pressure from the nuclear powers) may reasonably expect some significant acts of nuclear renunciation by the nuclear powers. This is not simply the "formalities of treaties": Equity here has to do with the incentives involved in both the foreign policies and domestic politics of hitherto nonnuclear powers. Equity is a synonym for "justice as fairness"; it is not necessarily a claim to statistical parity. Increasingly, this demand for equity must be satisfied politically if the world order Stone wants is to be achieved. That's what it means to say that ethics must begin with politics.

Speaking of politics now in its more limited electoral sense, I can only agree with Stone (and fifty million other voters, I hope!) that the retirement of Gerald Ford and Henry Kissinger in 1976 is essential to significant progress in disarmament. Stone sees this political reality more clearly than Weber does. Unfortunately, there is little advance indication that any likely alternative Presidents will make disarmament a major campaign issue.

A word about the churches. Of course, the Almighty works through other institutions. But the focusing of distinctly ethical concerns in disarmament must be seen and expressed as a religious imperative by those who profess to be religious. As for the university, probably fewer than 1 per cent of all colleges and universities in the U.S. offer as much as a single course in disarmament. The awful fact is that "the action" is hardly to be found in either religious or secular institutions.

Theodore Weber invokes his own brand of "realism" to invalidate what he assumes to be my assumptions. I certainly do not assume that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is actually the highest priority of all states, nor do I assume that it ought to be. *Preventing nuclear war*, however, is a self-evident priority. Only one aspect of that complex priority is involved in preventing nuclear weapons spread or horizontal proliferation. In fact, the whole thrust of my argument is that a much higher priority must be given to reversing the spiral of *vertical* proliferation if the many-sided arms race and the energy crisis are to be brought under effective political control. I do not assume that is an easy task; I only assume that the consequences of failure may be terracidal.

Second, Weber's claim that I have slighted the "centrality of power competition" between the U.S. and USSR does not really illuminate the dynamics of the arms race. Of course, the Superpowers are dangerous rivals, in addition to being in a hegemonic relationship to nonnuclear powers. But their arms escalations are not simply functions of their own rivalry. The Soviet-Chinese rivalry imposes a major obstacle to the readiness of both Communist states for nuclear disarmament, even as the Chinese exhort the U.S. not to weaken its posture versus the USSR. There are also powerful domestic and institutional drives at work here. The bureaucratic momentum of military technology generated by increasingly habitual cycles of research, development, production, and deployment is increasingly dissociated from the "action-reaction phenomenon" of Superpower relationships. In short, Weber's image of the arms race is simplistic.

Third, Weber prefers to interpret the motives of NPT holdouts in terms of their own regional rivalries, thus relaxing pressure on nuclear powers to fulfill their own "good faith" obligations. This is a very serious argument—and a familiar one, for it was repeatedly made by U.S. delegates in Geneva and continues to be made by Ford's lieutenants. But why take a simple either/or position on this issue? Even if some regional rivalries do tend to generate more incentives than do wider concerns for world order, an equitable NPT regime would deprive holdouts of the legitimacy with which the Superpower violations now clothe them. Moreover, a really effective nonproliferation regime itself requires more substantial security assurances for nonnuclear powers, which assurances could greatly mitigate regional hostilities.

Weber has simply missed my main point about China. It is not the "Chinese solution" (a term I did not, in fact, use at all) that is difficult to answer. It is the Chinese *critique* of U.S.-Soviet violation/manipulation of the NPT which is almost unanswerable. China's sometime advocacy of

greater proliferation is obviously precluded for me by my own commitment to nonproliferation. However, there is no evidence that China has ever taken any material action to promote proliferation.

The suggestion that nonnuclear states should divert their pressure from the U.S. to the USSR ignores one of the biggest facts of life in contemporary world politics: On defense and disarmament issues, most nonnuclear states tend to view the Superpowers as mirror images of each other and to subject them to equal criticism. There was no peculiarly anti-American animus at Geneva last May. In fact, the strains between Soviet and nonnuclear delegations were notably acute.

What is more amiss with Weber's "Goldwaterism" (his word!) is his claim that the Soviet Union has been more provocative recently than the U.S. and that Schlesinger's dismissal is a "good clue to where the action is." I have no interest in trying to prove the innocence of the Soviet Union's weapons policies and force deployments; that cannot be done. But those policies and deployments need to be seen in parallel with U.S. MIRV expansion, the confused dogmas and threats of "counterforce" and possible "first use," R & D on cruise missiles and MARVs, a $92 billion B-1 bomber force, Trident submarines at $2 billion each, and reneging on the Vladivostok understanding that Soviet *Backfire* (medium) bombers were not to be included in the Ford-Brezhnev ceiling of 2,400 strategic delivery vehicles. On the public record it is readily arguable that the U.S. is at least as responsible for the SALT impasse as the USSR is.

Finally, I really didn't mean to seem very theological in my use of the word "covenant" to refer to the NPT. Of course, the "working ethic" of the U.S. and USSR in drafting their original versions of the NPT was anything but covenantal. The "good faith" obligations of Article VI, along with provision for a review conference, were clearly imposed upon the Superpowers as the political price of subscription by nonnuclear powers. Recalling those very political circumstances hardly diminishes the covenantal character of the treaty, however: It reminds us that this was indeed the crucial, central, solemn bargain without which the Superpowers would never have gotten their treaty at all. Which is why so many nonnuclear states are so thoroughly disillusioned over the Non-Proliferation Treaty—and why political realism, at least sometimes, coincides with ethical integrity.

Correspondence

[from p. 2]

Finally, strengthening the U.N. is impossible so long as it reflects the present diversity of purposes and systems in the world. Thirty years ago it was understandable that many viewed the U.N. as the "last, best hope for peace." But we have seen, unhappily, that a generation of experience renders that outlook naive.

Social Power

To the Editors: Allow me a brief response to your "Briefly Noted" review of our publication, *Poverty in American Democracy: A Study of Social Power* (*Worldview*, October, 1975). It is true that we call for a serious examination of the allocation of resources and economic decision-making through the institution of private property and free enterprise. This is due to our fear that decisions for public goods, infrastructural development and human resources development are being made in ways which benefit some regions and economic groupings in our country unjustly at the expense of others. Certainly we did not call for abolition of the institution of private ownership, but do suggest that it would be more equitable, and that it was intended to be more equitable by many leaders at the founding of our country....

I think it is an overstatement to suggest we are "preoccupied" with redistribution of wealth, although we do mention the idea after examining how lopsided productive wealth ownership is in our country. Your reviewer makes no mention of whether our "preoccupations" are true or not....

About the only statement in your review which seems possibly fair is his/her critique of our style in the suggestion that "run-of-the-pew Catholics" could be offended by the material, and that it will fail to mobilize Catholics to build a better society. That is, of course, possible. It is too early to say. In any case, we do not think of our people as "run-of-the-pew," and trust in what judgment they would make after reading the book for themselves....

Frederick J. Perella
Assistant Education Coordinator
Campaign for Human Development
U.S. Catholic Conference
Washington, D.C.

CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

Please notify the *Worldview* subscription department six weeks in advance of your move to insure uninterrupted delivery of the journal.