

A RETURN TO SANITY

UNITED STATES LEADERSHIP FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS-FREE WORLD

A Briefing for the New President

By David Krieger



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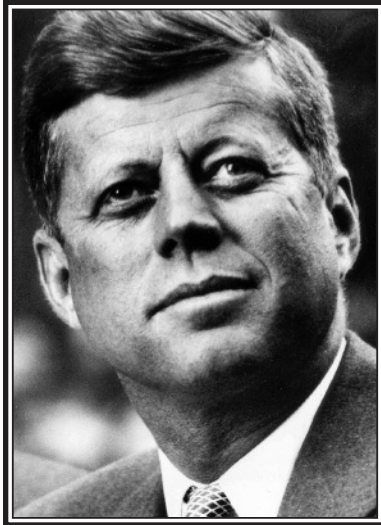
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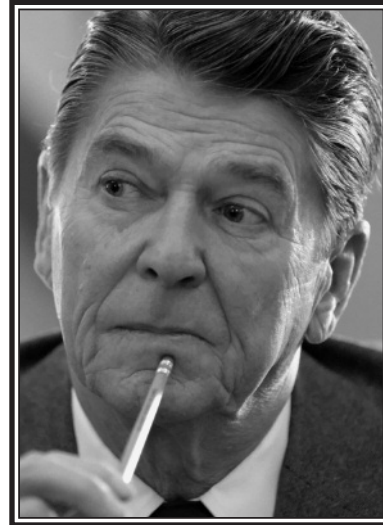
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Courtesy John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

“Total war makes no sense...in an age when the deadly poisons produced by a nuclear exchange would be carried by the wind and water and soil and seed to the far corners of the globe and to generations unborn.”

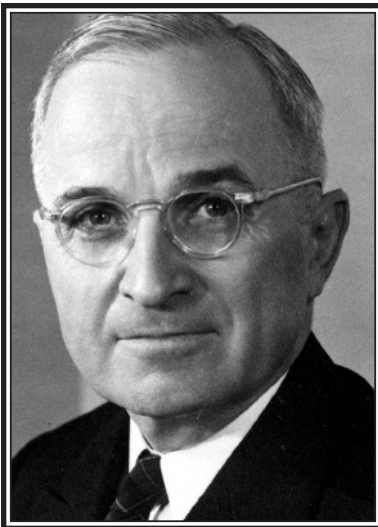
—President John F. Kennedy



Courtesy Ronald Reagan Library

“A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?”

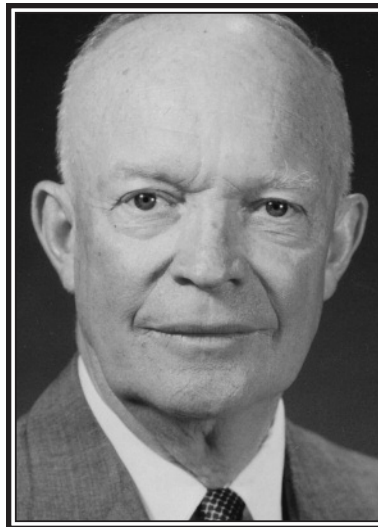
—President Ronald Reagan



Harry S. Truman Library and Institute

“There is nothing more urgent confronting the people of all nations than the banning of all nuclear weapons under a foolproof system of international control.”

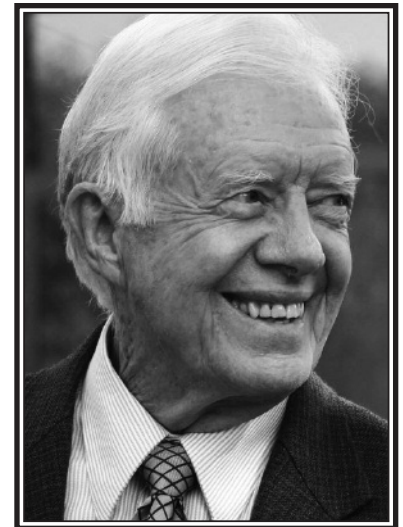
—President Harry S. Truman



Courtesy Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Archives

“We are in the era of the thermonuclear bomb that can obliterate cities and can be delivered across continents. With such weapons, war has become, not just tragic, but preposterous.”

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower



Sarah Saunders/ The Carter Center

“In an all-out nuclear war, more destructive power than in all of World War II would be unleashed every second during the long afternoon it would take for all the missiles and bombs to fall.... The survivors, if any, would live in despair amid the poisoned ruins of a civilization that had committed suicide.”

—President Jimmy Carter

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The most important thing to understand about nuclear weapons is this: *these weapons do not and cannot provide physical protection to their possessors.* Please let this thought sink in.

The second most important thing to understand about these weapons is that *they are weapons of genocide writ large or, as the philosopher John Somerville has labeled them, weapons of omnicide, capable of the destruction of all.*¹ These weapons put at risk the future of humankind and most life on earth. Please also let this thought sink in.

The third most important thing to understand about nuclear weapons is that *they are in the hands of human beings with all their frailties and fallibilities, and, as such, these weapons are disasters waiting to occur.* Please let this thought sink in as well.

How the new U.S. president understands the functions, limits and dangers of nuclear weapons will guide his approach to U.S. nuclear policy, and this policy, in turn, will be a key factor in determining the future security of our country and the world. Nuclear weapons are the only weapon that could destroy the United States and end human civilization.

An arsenal of thousands of nuclear weapons cannot protect the United States from a terrorist nuclear attack. The best defense against a nuclear attack is neither deterrence nor missile defenses. It is a world free of nuclear weapons, achieved by negotiations for the phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent elimination of these weapons.

The greater the reliance of the U.S. and its allies on nuclear weapons, the greater the danger that these weapons will proliferate and fall into the hands of terrorist groups that cannot be deterred from using them. A declarative policy aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons backed up by actions demonstrating U.S. leadership toward this goal is strongly in the interests of the U.S. and the world. This should be one of the uppermost policy concerns of the new president.

There is much to be done to repair the dangerous directions in U.S. nuclear policy pursued by past administrations and intensified under the administration of George W. Bush.

General Omar Bradley, a leading U.S. general in World War II, observed, "The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than we know about peace, more about killing than we know about liv-

ing."² General Bradley recognized clearly the gap between power and conscience. In a world in which nuclear weapons have the power to destroy civilization and even humankind, we are challenged to close this dangerous gap. To achieve this goal will require leadership from the president of the United States.

TEN KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Here are ten key considerations in seeking to understand the nuclear dilemma that confronts humanity and threatens our common future:

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NUCLEAR TERRORISM

For more than six decades, the leaders of nuclear weapons states have been playing Russian roulette with nuclear arms, holding these weapons to the heads of their own people as well as their enemies and to the head of humanity as a whole. Such behavior may be rightly viewed as state-sponsored terrorism. In addition to its illegality and immorality, continued reliance on nuclear weapons by the nuclear weapons states opens the door for these weapons to fall into the possession of non-state terrorist organizations.

Despite the end of the Cold War, the dangers posed by nuclear weapons have not diminished. Some experts believe that the dangers have actually increased. The concern is that eventually the weapons will be used by design, miscalculation or accident.

It should be clear that it will not be possible to deter terrorist organizations from using nuclear weapons, should these weapons come into their possession. A necessary although not sufficient condition for deterrence to be effective is that the deterring party be able to locate the target of deterrence. With terrorists, this is not likely. Further, terrorists are often suicidal and therefore not concerned with the threat of retaliation.

The more nuclear weapons in the world and the more they spread to new countries, the more likely it is that the weapons or the materials to create them will be obtained by terrorist organizations. Thus, it is strongly in the interests of powerful states, especially the United States, to lead the way to a nuclear weapons-free future.

THE ONLY WAY TO WIN: NEGOTIATE A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

General Bradley observed, "The way to win an atomic war is to make certain it never starts."³ There is only one way to be certain that a nuclear war never starts, and that is to abolish nuclear weapons under strict and effective international control. Steps short of this goal will continue to leave open the door to nuclear catastrophe.

The only way the abolition of nuclear weapons can be achieved is with concerted leadership by the United States. The U.S. has the world's most powerful military force. If it doesn't lead, the other nuclear weapons states, starting with Russia, will not follow this path. This does not mean that the U.S. must unilaterally disarm. It

1. Nuclear weapons, even large nuclear arsenals, cannot provide physical protection against other nuclear weapons. The threat of retaliation is not protection.
2. Deterrence is not defense against a nuclear attack. If it were, missile defenses would not be needed. Missile defenses, however, are also not a reliable defense to a nuclear attack. They have the further disadvantage of stimulating offensive nuclear arms races, which is the reason the U.S. and the former Soviet Union entered into the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.
3. Continued reliance by nuclear weapons states on these weapons will likely lead to further nuclear proliferation, increasing the possibilities of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorist groups.
4. Of all the states in the world, the U.S. has the most to gain from achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.
5. U.S. security will be enhanced by reducing the size of all nuclear arsenals, including its own, and gaining strict and effective international control of all nuclear weapons and the fissile materials that could be used for making nuclear weapons.
6. U.S. leadership is the single most important factor in making progress on the path to nuclear weapons abolition.
7. By leading the world toward nuclear weapons abolition, the United States would be acting legally, morally and pragmatically, and would raise its status among the world's nations.
8. For the United States to make significant progress in moving toward a world free of nuclear weapons, presidential leadership will be critical, particularly in ending or severely limiting weapons programs such as missile defenses and space weaponization that are obstacles to progress on nuclear disarmament.
9. The time is right for U.S. leadership on nuclear disarmament, but if the U.S. fails to lead, as it has for the past two administrations, the opportunity may be lost forever.
10. With the assumption of office of the new president in 2009, there will be an opportunity to assert bold and decisive leadership on this issue.

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means that it must demonstrate by its policies that it is serious about ending its reliance on nuclear weapons and use its leadership and convening power to bring the other nuclear weapons states to the negotiating table.

PROBLEMS WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The leaders of the nuclear weapons states have conceptualized using nuclear weapons in three principal ways: to deter by threatening retaliation for a prohibited behavior; to coerce, forcing another state to bend to one's will; and to hold in reserve an arsenal of ultimate weapons to defeat an enemy in warfare. All of these uses are provocative, support double standards, encourage proliferation, and are more likely to fail than to succeed under real world conditions.

Deterrence

The threat of retaliation to prevent an undesired act is generally referred to as deterrence. When the threat is based on nuclear retaliation, it is referred to as nuclear deterrence. History has demonstrated on numerous occasions in the post-World War II period that nuclear weapons are not an effective deterrent to conventional attacks, nor has the possession and implied threat of nuclear weapons use led to victories in wars against non-nuclear weapon states.

The greatest shortcomings to deterrence are that it requires three highly improbable conditions: first, clear and effective communications concerning intentions; second, that the will to carry out the intentions be believed by one's enemy; and third, decision-makers who act rationally under all circumstances, including those of extreme stress. As we know, there are numerous barriers, psychological and technical, to clear and effective communications. It is only natural to doubt that leaders of any country would carry out an act so horrendously immoral as causing the deaths of countless millions of innocent people. Finally, rationality is not to be counted on in all decision-makers at all times, especially in times of crisis.

Further, deterrence is not possible when the attackers cannot be located, as is the case with most terrorist organizations. If a terrorist group succeeded in obtaining and using a nuclear weapon against an American city or a city of one of our allies, against whom would we retaliate? The threat of retaliation is not effective when an opponent cannot be located or is suicidal.

In short, deterrence cannot be relied upon for protection. Arguably, the fact that there was not a nuclear exchange during the Cold War was as much if not more attributable to good luck as it was to deterrence. We came close to a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union on more than one occasion, including the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and the 1995 incident in which the Russian military mistook a joint U.S.-Norwegian satellite launch for an attack on Russia. In both instances, and others, the world has been at the brink of nuclear disaster.

A strong argument against nuclear deterrence was made in the January 2007 *Wall Street Journal* article, "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons," by George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn. These former leading U.S. policymakers stated, "The end of the Cold War made the doctrine of mutual Soviet-American

deterrence obsolete. Deterrence continues to be a relevant consideration for many states with regard to threats from other states. But reliance on nuclear weapons for this purpose is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective."⁴

Based upon this analysis, Shultz and his colleagues concluded: "Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and practical measures toward achieving that goal would be, and would be perceived as, a bold initiative consistent with America's moral heritage. The effort could have a profoundly positive impact on the security of future generations. Without the bold vision, the actions will not be perceived as fair or urgent. Without the actions, the vision will not be perceived as realistic or possible."⁵

A year later, the four former high-level U.S. policymakers co-authored another article in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Toward a Nuclear-Free World." In this article, they expressed concern that we had reached "a nuclear tipping point." They wrote, "We face a very real possibility that the deadliest weapons ever invented could fall into dangerous hands."⁶ They reiterated their loss of confidence in deterrence, "The steps we are taking now to address these threats are not adequate to the danger. With nuclear weapons more widely available, deterrence is decreasingly effective and increasingly hazardous."⁷

In June 2008, three former foreign secretaries of the UK and one former secretary general of NATO joined together to support the former U.S. policymakers in their call for a world free of nuclear weapons. They

*"But reliance on nuclear weapons for this purpose [deterrence] is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective."
— Shultz, Perry, Kissinger & Nunn*

argued, “the more nuclear material in circulation, the greater the risk that it falls into the wrong hands. And while governments, no matter how distasteful, are usually capable of being deterred, groups such as al-Qaeda, are not. Cold War calculations have been replaced by asymmetrical warfare and suicide missions.”⁸

Coercion

The use of nuclear weapons to coerce another nation, forcing it to bend to one’s will, is a dangerous game. It sends a message that a country is willing to use nuclear weapons in warfare, and this is provocative behavior. It encourages nuclear proliferation as a remedy to such threat.

To the extent that the U.S. relies upon nuclear weapons as weapons of war, we are sending the wrong message to the world. Other states will conclude that if the world’s most militarily powerful country needs nuclear weapons for coercion or war-fighting, they should do so as well. Thus, our reliance upon nuclear weapons is an invitation to nuclear proliferation. Currently, our stated policy of willingness to use nuclear weapons sends the message to other states that we find these weapons useful in our war planning. Most of the world’s states already reject a permanent two-tiered hierarchy of nuclear “haves” and “have-nots.” We are reinforcing their fear of our sustaining this dangerous double standard by our reliance upon these weapons for coercion.

Defeating an Enemy

Another use we make of nuclear weapons is the implicit or explicit threat of use in a situation in which our military fighting halfway across the world is in need of immediate backup. Again, this reliance on nuclear weapons is an inducement to proliferation.

Any use of nuclear weapons in war would break the taboo against their use that has existed since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No matter what the provocation, it is likely that the country breaking this taboo and using nuclear weapons would be viewed as an outlaw nation and would be ostracized by other nations. This would be particularly true of the United States as the only country to have already used nuclear weapons in warfare.

MISSILE DEFENSES AND SPACE WEAPONIZATION

If deterrence is not reliable to protect against a nuclear attack, is it likely that missile defenses can make a country invulnerable to a nuclear attack? Most experts, other than those being paid by firms profiting from missile defense contracts, have argued that missile defenses can be easily overcome by sophisticated nuclear attacks employing decoys or maneuverable missiles.⁹ Many missile defense tests classified as “successful” have used homing devices to allow the defensive missile to locate and shoot down the attacking missile. Of course, missile defenses have no ability to protect against a “suitcase bomb” or other nuclear device not delivered by a missile.

Although most Americans may believe that the U.S. would never use nuclear weapons first, this is not current U.S. policy.

Missile defenses undermine deterrence theory if viewed from the perspective of potential enemy nations. From their vantage point, these “defenses” appear to be offensive in that they allow for a “defense” against the relatively small number of missiles remaining after a successful first-strike attack. Although most Americans may believe that the U.S. would never use nuclear weapons first, this is not current U.S. policy, nor is it the perspective of security experts in other countries who must base their analyses on worst-case scenarios.

Missile defense plans include the possibility of weaponizing space, which would correctly be viewed as having both defensive and offensive capabilities. Russia and China have taken clear positions on preventing the weaponization of space, and have put forward proposals for a treaty banning space weaponization.¹⁰ The U.S. has rejected these attempts and sought to hold open the possibility of weaponizing space. In the 2007 United Nations General Assembly, the U.S. was the only country in the world to vote against a resolution calling for banning weapons from space.¹¹

If the United States seeks to create a world free of nuclear weapons, it will have to significantly alter current U.S. policies regarding missile defenses and space weaponization. To make progress on nuclear disarmament will require that agreements be reached ending or severely restricting missile defense programs and ending space weaponization programs.

LEGAL ISSUES

The United States agreed in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which entered into force in 1970, to engage in “good faith” negotiations for nuclear disarmament. The essential bargain of the NPT was that states that did not possess nuclear weapons agreed not to acquire them, and states that did possess them agreed to these “good faith” negotiations to eliminate them. The NPT might more appropriately have been called the “Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Treaty,” because one of its major goals, at least from the perspective of the non-nuclear weapons states, was to level the playing field with no nation possessing nuclear weapons.

At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the treaty was extended indefinitely, but with promises by the nuclear weapons states to do more to fulfill their obligations for nuclear disarmament.¹²

A year later, on July 8, 1996, the International Court of Justice issued an Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. The Court found in a split decision that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was generally illegal and found unanimously that “[t]here exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”¹³

Also during 1996, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was opened for signatures. While the United States was the first country to sign the treaty, ratification by the U.S. Senate was defeated in 1999 and the treaty was never resubmitted to the Senate by the Bush administration.¹⁴

In 2000, at the NPT Review Conference, the countries of the world agreed to 13 Practical Steps for Nuclear Disarmament. These included:

- **achieving the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;**
- **negotiating a verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons;**
- **applying the principle of irreversibility to nuclear disarmament;**
- **preserving and strengthening the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty;**

- **early entry into force of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, START II, and the conclusion of START III;**
- **further development of verification capabilities for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear weapons-free world; and**
- **“[a]n unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals....”¹⁵**

This agreement was widely viewed in the international community as an important step forward.

Unfortunately, the U.S. has been a major obstacle to virtually all of the 13 Practical Steps.

A significant setback in nuclear disarmament efforts occurred when the U.S. withdrew in 2002 from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to pursue missile defenses and space weaponization.

A significant setback in nuclear disarmament efforts occurred when the U.S. withdrew in 2002 from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to pursue missile defenses and space weaponization. U.S. efforts in these areas have led Russia and China to take offensive steps to offset U.S. defenses (in order to be satisfied that they are not vulnerable to a U.S. first-strike attack). Russia has expressed particular dissatisfaction with expanding NATO membership up to its borders; with U.S. plans to place missile defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic; and, most recently, with

Poland’s agreement, following the Russian-Georgian outbreak of violence, to accept U.S. interceptor missiles in its country.

Most important, the U.S. has failed to provide leadership on the promise in the 13 Practical Steps of an “unequivocal undertaking” for the elimination of nuclear arsenals. Five years later, the 2005 NPT Review Conference began with two wasted weeks of arguing over the agenda and ended without agreement and in failure.

MORAL ISSUES

In addition to legal concerns, the moral issues connected with the threat or use of nuclear weapons have been addressed by nearly every major religious body and interfaith organization. There is near unanimous agreement that any use of nuclear weapons would be deeply immoral due to the unsurpassed death and destruction that would result. The harm caused by nuclear weapons

is not only in the present, but carries on into the future due to the effects of radiation on the human body, including mutations in succeeding generations.

The International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons noted, “The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet.”¹⁶ The Court found that nuclear weapons had “unique characteristics,” including “their ability to cause damage to generations to come.”¹⁷

As the country that initially created nuclear weapons, used them in warfare and conducted more tests of these weapons than any other country, in the eyes of most of the world the U.S. has the primary moral responsibility to end the nuclear weapons threat to humanity.

PRAGMATIC ISSUES

The 2006 Report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Swedish diplomat Hans Blix, *Weapons of Terror, Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms*, summarized its concern with nuclear dangers in this way: “So long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, there is a risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. And any such use would be catastrophic.”¹⁸ In other words, so long as nuclear weapons exist, no one can guarantee that they will not be used and, without doubt, such use would be catastrophic. The thousands of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal provide no assurance that the U.S. will not become the victim of a nuclear attack.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapon capable of destroying the United States, and continue to place at risk the future of the country. While the odds of a successful nuclear attack against the United States may seem remote to most people, experts say the odds today are, in fact, far from insignificant. Nuclear expert Richard Garwin testified to Congress that he places the odds of a terrorist attack against the United States at 20 percent per year.¹⁹ Graham Allison of Harvard’s Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, an expert in nuclear terrorism, places the odds of a nuclear detonation by terrorists at greater than 50 percent over a ten year period.²⁰

There is only one country that can lead the way to a nuclear weapons-free future and that is the United States. If the U.S. does not provide leadership, it is unlikely that Russia will feel confident in taking its arsenal to lower levels and the other nuclear weapons states will resist lowering their arsenals as well. If the U.S. does provide leadership to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, it will help restore its leadership and respect in the world. The U.S. must begin by examining what it can do unilaterally to reduce risks of nuclear warfare and bilaterally with Russia to verifiably lower the size and threat of their arsenals and delivery systems. It must follow this by using its convening power to bring together the remainder of the nuclear weapons states to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention for the phased, verifiable, irreversible and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons in a series of confidence building steps that can be agreed to by all nations.

*“The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet.”
– International Court of Justice*

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Double standards are a reflection of imbalance. They create two-tier structures that are not viable in the long-term. This is true of the current world structure of nuclear “haves” and “have-nots.” The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was set up recognizing this two-tier structure as it existed in 1968. The equalizing mechanism in the NPT is found in Article VI of the treaty, which states, “Each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”²¹ U.S. policy should be geared toward ending double standards, which are invariably destabilizing. This would mean that U.S. policy should seek to fulfill Article VI obligations, but it would also mean applying the criteria of universal standards to other nuclear policies as they arise.

Applied to some current key issues, this would require, for example, that the U.S. not provide technical nuclear assistance to countries that are not parties to the NPT. There should be no special exceptions to this rule, such as those in the U.S.-India Nuclear Deal. This would also require that the U.S. not pursue the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, with its proposed provisions for allowing some countries to reprocess plutonium, which can be used for producing nuclear weapons. This would

create yet another level of double standards. Opposing double standards would also require either banning altogether the enrichment of uranium or establishing international inspection procedures that apply universally to all states.

There are no valid grounds for applying one set of standards to ourselves and our friends and allies and another set of standards to our perceived enemies. This will result in greater dissatisfaction with the systemic imbalance, and will lead to clandestine programs to level the playing field by means of nuclear proliferation.

THE VISION OF POST-WORLD WAR II PRESIDENTS

Many U.S. presidents have spoken out on nuclear dangers, although often not until late in their presidencies. None succeeded in reaching the necessary accords to achieve a nuclear weapons-free world, although some took important steps to reduce nuclear dangers. It may be useful to review some of the more important statements on nuclear disarmament by post-World War II presidents.

Harry Truman, although he used nuclear weapons twice in the final days of World War II, concluded, "There is nothing more urgent confronting the people of all nations than the banning of all nuclear weapons under a foolproof system of international control."²²

Dwight David Eisenhower stated at the 1956 Republican National Convention, "We are in the era of the thermonuclear bomb that can obliterate cities and can be delivered across continents. With such weapons, war has become, not just tragic, but preposterous."²³

John F. Kennedy spoke out in a speech at American University on June 10, 1963, having the previous fall gone through the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy said with great passion,

I speak of peace because of the new face of war. Total war makes no sense in an age where great powers can maintain large and relatively invulnerable nuclear forces and refuse to surrender without resort to those forces. It makes no sense in an age where a single nuclear weapon contains almost ten times the explosive force delivered by all the allied air forces in the Second World War. It makes no sense in an age

when the deadly poisons produced by a nuclear exchange would be carried by wind and water and soil and seed to the far corners of the globe and to generations yet unborn.

Today the expenditure of billions of dollars every year on weapons acquired for the purpose of making sure we never need them is essential to the keeping of peace. But surely the acquisition of such idle stockpiles – which can only destroy and never create – is not the only, much less the most efficient, means of assuring peace. I speak of peace, therefore, as the necessary, rational end of rational men. I realize the pursuit of peace is not as dramatic as the pursuit of war, and frequently the words of the pursuers fall on deaf ears. But we have no more urgent task.²⁴

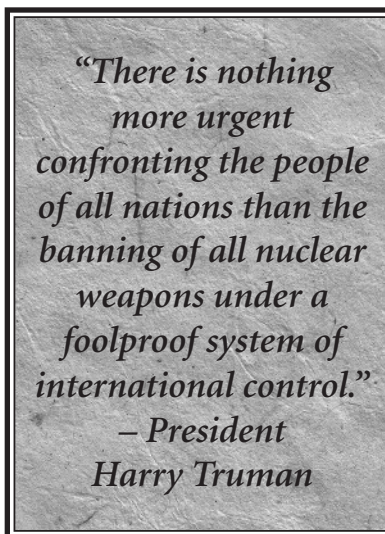
Jimmy Carter, in his Farewell Address, warned, "In an all-out nuclear war, more destructive power than in all of World War II would be unleashed every second during the long afternoon it would take for all the missiles and bombs to fall. A World War II every second – more people killed in the first few hours than all the wars of history put together. The survivors, if any, would live in despair amid the poisoned ruins of a civilization that had committed suicide."²⁵

Ronald Reagan was perhaps the U.S. president who became most passionately committed to abolishing nuclear weapons, and he came close to doing so when he met with Soviet leader Mikhail

Gorbachev in 1986 at a summit in Reykjavik, Iceland. If it were not for the two leaders' inability to agree on limitations to Reagan's missile defense plans, the goal of a nuclear weapons-free world might already have been achieved. Reagan said, "A nuclear war cannot be won, and must never be fought. The only value in our two nations possessing nuclear weapons is to make sure they will never be used. But then would it not be better to do away with them entirely?"²⁶

ACHIEVING A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

There are a variety of ways in which the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons can be attained. All begin with a vision of a world free of nuclear weapons, followed by a series of steps to achieve this vision. Some of the steps may be unilateral, others bilateral between the U.S. and Russia (since they have between them more than 95 percent of



the nuclear weapons on the planet), and still others multilateral involving the nine states possessing nuclear weapons and ultimately the entire international community. To reach the final goal will require a new international treaty that provides a roadmap for achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Similar treaties have already been negotiated for chemical and biological weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention.

The governments of Costa Rica and Malaysia have introduced into the United Nations a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention, prepared by leading civil society organizations.²⁷ The draft treaty demonstrates that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is feasible and provides a model of such a treaty. The 13 Practical Steps agreed to at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, with their emphasis on verification, irreversibility and “unequivocal commitment,” also provide important guidelines for proceeding down the road to nuclear weapons abolition.²⁸

The 2006 Report of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction put forward a series of 30 proposals for reducing the risks of nuclear weapons.²⁹ Among these recommendations are the following: a categorical policy of all nuclear weapons states of No First Use of these weapons, covering both preemptive and preventive actions, as well as retaliation for chemical, biological or conventional weapons attacks; a review of military plans to determine what is necessary to maintain credible non-nuclear security policies; and planning for security without nuclear weapons.

The group of former senior U.S. policymakers, led by George Shultz, has set forth a series of actions in pursuit of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. They have suggested that among the near-term steps that could be taken by the U.S. and Russia are the following:

- **extend the key provisions of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991 (START I);**
- **increase the warning and decision times for the launch of all nuclear-armed ballistic missiles;**
- **discard any existing operational plans for massive attacks still remaining from Cold War days;**

- **negotiate cooperative multilateral ballistic missile defense and early warning systems; and**
- **act to prevent terrorists from obtaining nuclear weapons or the materials to make them.**³⁰

Their proposals, with the exception of the continued pursuit of missile defenses, which is unnecessarily provocative and unlikely to be effective, deserve serious consideration in developing a strategy for the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

A report authored by analysts from several major scientific organizations, *Toward True Security*, puts forward ten steps that the new president should take to transform U.S. nuclear weapons policy.³¹ The steps can all be taken unilaterally, and begin with a declaration by the president “that the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons is to deter and, if necessary, respond to the use of nuclear weapons by another country.” This would, in effect, create a policy of No First Use. The authors argue, “Making it clear that the United States will not use nuclear weapons first would reduce the incentive for other nations to acquire these weapons to deter a potential U.S. first strike.”³²

At the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, we have our own set of steps for moving forward based upon reducing risks, downgrading reliance on nuclear weapons, and gaining global control over nuclear weapons and materials. They culminate in a Nuclear Weapons Convention and the reallocation of resources to peaceful purposes. These steps, which range from unilateral to multilateral, are:

- **De-alert.** Remove all nuclear weapons from high-alert status, separating warheads from delivery vehicles;
- **No First Use.** Make legally binding commitments to No First Use of nuclear weapons and establish nuclear policies consistent with this commitment;
- **No New Nuclear Weapons.** Initiate a moratorium on the research and development of new nuclear weapons, such as the Reliable Replacement Warhead;

“Making it clear that the United States will not use nuclear weapons first would reduce the incentive for other nations to acquire these weapons to deter a potential U.S. first strike.”
— *Toward True Security*

- **Ban Nuclear Testing Forever.** Ratify and bring into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- **Control Nuclear Material.** Create a verifiable Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty with provisions to bring all weapons-grade nuclear material and the technologies to create such material under strict and effective international control;
- **Nuclear Weapons Convention.** Commence good faith negotiations, as required by the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to achieve a Nuclear Weapons Convention for the phased, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons;
- **Resources for Peace.** Reallocate resources from the tens of billions currently spent on nuclear arms to alleviating poverty, preventing and curing disease, eliminating hunger and expanding educational opportunities throughout the world.³³

MOVING FORWARD

In moving forward, it will be critical to exert U.S. leadership for a nuclear weapons-free world in five areas:

First, educate the American people about the true dangers that nuclear weapons pose to them and the increased security that will be a consequence of reducing and eliminating nuclear arsenals. No one is better positioned to effectively do this than the president of the United States.

Second, take unilateral policy steps, such as a declaration of No First Use of nuclear weapons, to show the world that the U.S. is serious about reducing its own reliance on nuclear arms. By taking away the option of using nuclear weapons preemptively or preventively, the

U.S. will be demonstrating the requisite political will and setting a tone far more conducive to bilateral and multi-lateral negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

Third, work closely with the Russians in achieving major reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the two countries, in reducing the risks of accidental nuclear war, and in establishing protocols for controlling nuclear materials globally.

Fourth, focus on achieving universal and global standards and avoiding double standards in U.S. nuclear policies related to other states, ending the practice of applying one set of standards to ourselves and our friends and allies and another set of standards to our perceived enemies.

Fifth, use the convening power of the U.S. to bring together the nuclear weapons states and then all of the world's nations to negotiate a roadmap to a world free of nuclear weapons in the form of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

Redirecting U.S. nuclear policy toward achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is not a matter of politics or political gain; it is an issue of human survival. In the words of retired U.S. Air Force General George Lee Butler, former commander in chief of the U.S. Strategic

Command, "By what authority do succeeding generations of leaders in the nuclear weapons states usurp the power to dictate the odds of continued life on our planet? Most urgently, why does such breathtaking audacity persist at the moment when we should stand trembling in the face of our folly and united in our commitment to abolish its most deadly manifestation?"³⁴ Only the president of the United States can exert the necessary leadership to end this folly.

Redirecting U.S. nuclear policy toward achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is not a matter of politics or political gain; it is an issue of human survival.

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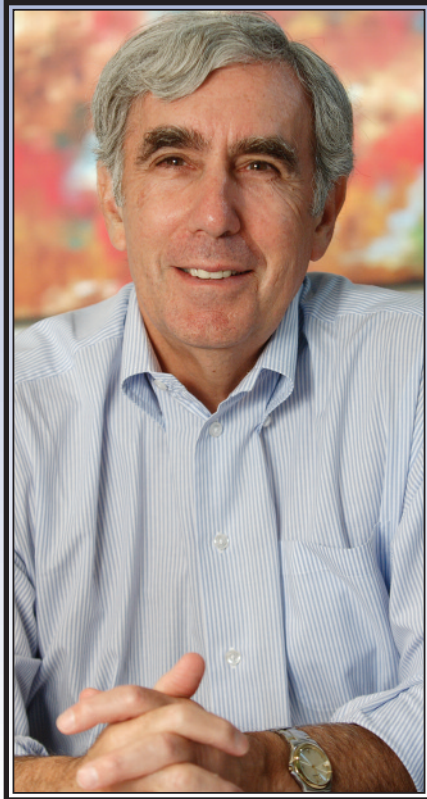


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Mission

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