

Foreword

AT THE DAWN of the nuclear age, Albert Einstein remarked, “Everything has changed but our way of thinking.”

He was right for a time, but the devastating consequences of the use of a nuclear weapon did create a pattern of thinking that, with whatever flaws, served us well for half a century or so. Containment through deterrent capability worked. But the Cold War powers also realized that prevention was essential and that energetic efforts should be made to arrest the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

I well remember preparations for my first meeting as secretary of state with Soviet foreign minister Gromyko in September 1982. I had assumed office in July. The temperature of the Cold War was frigid, the atmosphere confrontational, and I was counseled to act accordingly. I said, “OK, but there must be something we can do to identify a mutual interest.”

There were to be two meetings, held about a week apart. I got the president’s authorization to suggest, at the end of the first meeting, a few topics on which we might try to work collaboratively. Nuclear nonproliferation was one of them. Toward the end of the second meeting, Gromyko replied to my suggestions, expressing a willingness to make open and joint efforts to avoid the proliferation of nuclear weapons. So, even at the height of the Cold War, we were hard at work on our way of thinking.

The subject took high priority on Ronald Reagan's agenda. He thought that "mutual assured destruction" was not only MAD but also was an essentially immoral way to keep the peace. He said repeatedly, "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." His aim was to abolish nuclear weapons. However elusive that goal may have been, he did start the ball rolling toward reduction in the Soviet and U.S. arsenals. But he worried, prophetically, about rogue states obtaining even one of these awesome weapons.

Clearly, the end of the Cold War has drastically reduced the threat of nuclear holocaust. But the world remains a dangerous place in different ways. In a world of terrorist threats and rogues that call themselves states yet behave outside the bounds of civilized norms, we are once again called upon to examine our concepts. That is what this book is about, and no intellectual task is more urgent or more relevant to current operational issues.

Sid Drell and Jim Goodby have between them vast experience in the area of nuclear weapons and have long been active voices in the nuclear debate. In this volume, they put their key recommendations right up front, in their introduction. That is appropriate. The reader knows at the outset where the authors are going. All of their conclusions have deep merit and the weight of careful argument and factual development. Some will be the subject of debate. That debate, in turn, is one of the important purposes of this book.

Having had the privilege of reading this work in earlier manuscript form and discussing its subject at length with the authors, I value this book because of its essence: the

Careful development of a framework for thinking about nuclear weapons in times punctuated by terrorist threats.

All the elements are here: a relevant history, including an illuminating chart on page 6 on the time pattern of state acquisition of nuclear weapons; a virtual inventory of preventive actions; a searching examination of the circumstances when preemptive military action may be necessary; the problems of intelligence and monitoring; a new look at ballistic missile defenses; the importance of the U.S. example (as in testing); and ideas about what Russia and the United States can do with their special responsibilities. The authors develop the necessary interplay of strength and diplomacy as they address current problems. Work your way through the issues that are presented in settings in various countries. You will find, as I have, that the analytic framework will help you develop your own ideas of how to address critical problems.

Now is a time that cries out for new concepts, often using old principles, about how the world works. If he were still around, Einstein might well be challenging us once again to examine “our way of thinking.” And in doing so, he would surely find in Drell and Goodby worthy partners as they address the gravest danger.

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