12. Regional Animosities and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation

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Summary Conclusions

- Regional animosities contribute, upon occasion, to nuclear proliferation, but other considerations are usually equally or more important.
- An effective policy to prevent further proliferation will combine efforts to deal with the more general problems (such as "de-legitimizing" nuclear weapons as a source of national power) with specific moves to defuse the most dangerous aspects of regional confrontations.
- Every confrontation has unique aspects; though policy should be broadly consistent, it must be tailored to the specific situation with which it deals. In particular, policymakers must avoid the assumption that others "think like we do." Their thought processes are often quite different, which makes it important to take into account the culture and history of forces in the specific area.
- Regimes hostile to a nuclear-armed state may perceive that nuclear weapons provide the most reliable deterrence to military action aimed at removing them.
- This suggests that threats of possible military action, whether direct or implied, can be counterproductive. The historical record indicates (1) that nuclear-armed states do not use force against

other states with nuclear arms; and (2) that threats from external powers tend to unite a country in support of the existing regime.

- States that have terminated nuclear weapons programs (Brazil, South Africa, and Libya are examples) have done so—each for different reasons—when they deemed that possession of the weapons would create unacceptable dangers and that forgoing the program would actually make the ruling regime more secure.
- U.S. diplomacy in the 1980s, which led to an end of the Cold War, suggests that direct communication at the most senior levels of government is a useful—probably essential—tool to find peaceful ways to resolve disputes.
- The combination of six-power talks with bilateral negotiations seems the most appropriate approach to North Korea, despite the obvious difficulties. Steps should continue to broaden the dialogue that has begun with Iran, both bilaterally and in the context of regional fora. It might be helpful for the United States to outline the features of a *modus vivendi* with both North Korea and Iran that would permit eventually normalizing relations. Multilateral pressures on both will be an essential supplement to direct talks.
- Given Pakistan's current political instability, its nuclear arsenal constitutes a more serious immediate threat than the prospect of Iranian weapons. The current political turmoil may continue and intensify, increasing the chances that some of Pakistan's weapons could find their way into the hands of terrorists. U.S. options are severely limited, but more attention must be given to undermining the popular assumption that the United States is anti-Islam, not only in order to help stabilize conditions in Pakistan, but also to improve relations in other areas of the Islamic world.
- Should Iran resume its nuclear weapons program, it would very likely stimulate further nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. Syria is already suspected of planning a weapons program and others might well follow that pattern if the Iranian program is resumed and approaches weapons capability. Similarly, if North Korea continues to develop and improve its capability, the pres-

sure on Japan, South Korea, and perhaps even Taiwan to follow suit would grow.

- Until there is a generally accepted settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation, Israel's possession of nuclear weapons will be used as an excuse or pretext for development of nuclear weapons in Muslim countries. Even if a settlement is possible, however, it would not, in itself, remove the allure of nukes given the high levels of tension between Islamic states.
- A new set of regional confrontations has arisen of late that have serious implications for nuclear proliferation: those of Russia with some of its neighbors, particularly with Ukraine and Georgia. A continuation and further exacerbation of these tensions could ultimately revive a desire on Ukraine's part to re-acquire a nuclear weapons capability. More immediately, these tensions, if unresolved, are likely to make Russia less willing to join the U.S. in a program to accelerate the reduction of nuclear weapons.
- This suggests that the U.S. should re-assess its attitude toward a near-term NATO membership for Ukraine (where the majority of the population is opposed to NATO membership), and for Georgia, which is confronted with unresolved disputes with the *de facto* independent enclaves it claims. U.S. policy should continue to support the independence of all the ex-Soviet states, but should encourage those governments to avoid gratuitous actions which would inevitably be viewed as provocative by Russia.
- The U.S. should also re-assess the necessity for some of its other plans, such as for missile-defense installations in Eastern Europe, if they diminish Russian willingness to cooperate on other nuclear issues. A program to develop missile defenses jointly with Russia, and perhaps China and interested NATO countries, would facilitate better overall cooperation in reducing the number of nuclear weapons and restraining further proliferation.
- To deal effectively with regional confrontations that encourage nuclear proliferation, the U.S. must avoid, whenever possible, total support for a single party to the dispute but rather cultivate a

position from which it can act as an honest broker. It also must recognize, both in stated policy and in practice, that these problems cannot be solved or eliminated by unilateral U.S. action, but require multilateral cooperation, which will often require agreeing to arrangements that are less than optimum from the U.S. point of view.

Regional animosities and confrontations obviously have contributed to nuclear weapons proliferation. Israel's sense of vulnerability, combined with the open hostility of its Arab neighbors, resulted in the Israeli government's decision to "go nuclear" without publicly acknowledging the fact. India's territorial dispute with China and political animosity doubtless contributed to India's decision to develop nuclear weapons, even as it denied that it was doing so; the Indian program, in turn, practically guaranteed that Pakistan would seek its own nuclear arsenal. Therefore, it will be useful to examine the conditions under which regional animosities encourage nuclear proliferation and to consider whether there are ways the United States might reduce the risk of proliferation by dealing with such disputes.

We should bear in mind at the outset that, while regional tensions may well contribute to decisions to develop a nuclear arsenal, they rarely provide the sole motivation. Questions of prestige, the political power of incumbent governments, and relations of the country with nuclear weapons states probably contribute more to decisions to develop a nuclear capability than the specific tensions in the region where the country is located.[1] Even successful attempts to reduce regional tensions are unlikely to deter the spread of nuclear weaponry except to the degree to which to they supplement other, more general, policies. Most fundamentally, nuclear weapons must be devalued as a source of power and prestige; nuclear weapons states must renew (or—if not a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty—undertake) the commitment to reduce their nuclear arsenals with a goal of total

1. Israel may be an exception in this regard, since its decision presumably resulted primarily from its feeling of vulnerability to hostile neighbors.

abolition; and all parties must be more active in strengthening an international legal framework that discourages and handicaps further proliferation.

We also need to consider the impact that American policy toward regional disputes has on the stance of other nuclear powers. In this respect, the tensions that have developed between Russia and some of the countries that were once part of the Soviet Union or members of the Warsaw Pact are relevant. To the degree that American policy is seen in Moscow as exploiting these tensions to the detriment of Russian security, the Russian government will inevitably become more resistant to cooperation with the United States in the nuclear weapons area. We also cannot exclude the possibility that, should these tensions develop into chronic confrontations, some of the ex-Soviet states might feel constrained to re-aquire some of the nuclear weapons they possessed upon the Soviet collapse, but either destroyed or transferred to Russia.[2]

This paper will first examine the reasons countries have decided to acquire nuclear weapons and why some have decided to terminate programs before they produced useable weapons. Then it will look at the salient characteristics of some regional confrontations, consider the impact that cultural differences exert on the perceptions of the main actors, and describe the impact of regional animosities on Russian nuclear policy. Finally, it will consider whether the United States can bolster its non-proliferation policy by attempting to reduce regional confrontations.

In dealing with these questions, I will refer at times to our experience in dealing with the Soviet Union during the years of Ronald Reagan's presidency. The issues we face today are in some important respects different, but in many respects similar. Where there are sim-

2. When the Soviet Union ceased to exist at the end of 1991, there were nuclear weapons in four of the successor states: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan. Belarus immediately transferred the weapons on its territory to Russia; Kazakhstan and Ukraine did so subsequently, following negotiations in which the United States participated.

ilarities, we can learn from what worked in the 1980s, and in some cases lessons from that period can be usefully applied to the very different challenges of the present.

Why Do Countries Want Nuclear Weapons?

We often hear assertions that country X or country Y provides support to terrorists and therefore terrorists are likely to obtain nuclear weapons if that country develops them. Actual experience suggests that this is unlikely: Up to now, countries with nuclear weapons that also have ties to terrorist groups have jealously guarded their weapons and kept them out of the hands of terrorists. Both the Soviet Union and China supported certain terrorist groups, but never let them come close to their nuclear weapons. Furthermore, neither supplied the weapons to third countries, however friendly, although the Soviet Union supplied some technology to China in the early stages of its program, and China supplied technology to Pakistan.

Even though the primary motivation for developing a nuclear weapons capability is unlikely to be for the benefit of terrorists, the risk that terrorists will find a way to acquire such weapons obviously increases if more and more countries develop nuclear arsenals. Therefore, every reasonable effort must be made to prevent the spread of a nuclear-weapons capability to additional states. Even so, it is equally important to make sure that terrorist groups have no access to existing stocks of nuclear weapons or their components. Both North Korea and Pakistan—for different reasons—have a record of selling nuclear materials and technology and, given the fragility of governments in both countries, they may present a greater danger than Iran would, should it acquire a nuclear weapons capability.

The reasons the five "legal" (under the NPT) nuclear powers developed their weapons are clear: the U.S. and U.K. conducted a joint program to develop a weapon to use in World War II—and to do so before their adversaries could produce such a weapon. Stalin ordered the development of nuclear weapons because he did not wish to place the USSR at a strategic disadvantage in dealing with the Western

powers following World War II. Both France and China decided to develop a nuclear weapons capability to give them the basis for a foreign policy independent of the leaders of the alliances in which they participated.

Israel, India, and Pakistan refused to sign the NPT, and over time each developed an independent capability, for reasons already mentioned. North Korea was an NPT signatory but violated the Treaty by developing a weapons capability clandestinely. Brazil, South Africa, Libya, and Iraq have had active programs in the past, but have terminated their programs. Brazil became convinced that it was better served by adhering to the Treaty of Tlatelolco than by continuing with a weapons-development program which could have resulted in a nuclear arms race with Chile and Argentina. South Africa voluntarily dismantled its program when its leaders decided to end the apartheid regime and accept majority rule. Libya seems to have terminated its program when its leaders tired of trying to circumvent economic sanctions and were shaken by the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Iraq, of course, has been found to have abandoned its program in the wake of the sanctions and inspections imposed at the end of the Gulf War of 1991. However, in Iraq's case, Saddam Hussein, in calculated fashion, left the impression that he still had some WMD capability, presumably in order to enhance his leverage over neighboring states.

There are unique features of each instance cited and it would be hazardous to go far in drawing general conclusions. Nevertheless, it would seem that regimes are inclined to seek a nuclear weapons capability when they feel that nuclear weapons are necessary to deter an attack on them and/or when they seek what they perceive to be the advantage of belonging to an exclusive "club" of nuclear powers. Once started on a program to develop such weapons, these regimes seem to be deterred only if they are convinced that continuing the program will pose a greater threat to their existence than terminating it.

There is also one other clear lesson from past experience: "democratization"—even if feasible in a given instance—is no insurance

against a nation's decision to develop a nuclear capability. France, Israel, and India are all countries with democratic forms of government and all decided to "go nuclear" when most of the rest of the world disapproved. Pakistan's program proceeded unimpeded when Pakistan had democratically elected governments—to attempt to terminate the program would have meant political suicide in Pakistan at the time. This suggests that, at present, even a democratically elected government in Iran might well continue the Iranian program unless the external political environment is altered.

Huntington Light, or the Impact of Cultural Differences

In the 1990s, Harvard professor Samuel Huntington wrote a much-acclaimed article, then book, predicting a future "conflict of civilizations." Some of his conclusions seem overdrawn, particularly his definition of what constitutes a "civilization" and his predictions that most future conflicts will be between civilizations rather than within them. (Today, the violence between Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq, and between Kurds and Arabs or Turks illustrate conflicts *within* Huntington's purported "civilizations.") Nevertheless, Huntington's thesis does highlight the role of culture in conditioning nations and sub-national groups to conflict or cooperation. That factor has been given insufficient attention in most international relations theory, and is often poorly understood by policymakers.

International relations is not the interaction of undifferentiated billiard balls, as some theorists contend, but of human beings acting in what the individuals perceive as their own interest—the most important of which is to stay alive and in power. What is perceived as a threat will be determined as much by culture, history, and experience as by facts and logic. One of the most damaging assumptions that any policymaker can make is to assume that political leaders from radically different cultures think the same way we would, and tend to react to our statements and actions as we believe a "rational" person would.

Lessons from the Cold War

The way the Cold War was ended contains many potential lessons. One of the most important was the value of establishing direct communication with the Soviet leaders even when their policies seemed diametrically opposed to U.S. interests. Some of President Reagan's advisers felt strongly that, given the nature of the Soviet regime, the Soviet record of broken promises, and the Communist ideology that aimed at the destruction of the "bourgeois West," there was no reason to deal directly with them at the highest levels. The Soviet leaders could not be persuaded to change their ways, these advisers argued, but could be defeated only by consistent military, economic, and political pressure. Proponents could find an abundance of facts to support this argument; if the Soviet Union operated the way Leninist theory dictated, they would have been right.

But President Reagan knew that ideology, important as it was, was not the whole story. The Soviet Union was an evil empire, and—unlike many of his contemporaries in the West—he was prepared to say so, but he understood that the Soviet Union was led by human beings who might be reached by reason, provided they could be persuaded that they could not win an arms race and disabused of their unfounded fear that the United States was planning a nuclear attack or was seeking military superiority to place them at a political disadvantage. Therefore, President Reagan was open to Secretary of State Shultz's ideas for engaging the Soviet leaders in a frank discussion. Communication did not mean accepting the erroneous perceptions of the Soviet leaders or compromising U.S. interests; it did mean an effort of muscular diplomacy, backed by strength, to convince the Soviet leaders that they had more to gain from abandoning their aggressive policies and ending the arms race than by engaging in a competition that they would lose.

Communication, however, would have been of limited use if the American attitude had been that cooperation with the Soviet Union would be possible only if the Communist Party relinquished power—

that is, if the object of our diplomacy had been to change the Soviet regime rather than to change the behavior of the Soviet regime. Of course we wanted the Soviet regime to change, to become more democratic and more responsive to the wishes of its people, but President Reagan knew that such changes had to come from within, and that they were unlikely to occur in a Cold War environment of threats and mutual hostility. That is why he gave explicit instructions to American officials not to question the legitimacy of the Soviet government, and also why both he and Secretary Shultz insisted on conducting our most active diplomacy to protect human rights in private, rather than in the public arena. They understood that a foreign leader does not like to be seen changing policies simply because the United States demands it.

A third lesson from the Cold War is the importance of healthy alliances. The U.S. had many disagreements with its allies on secondary issues and did not always get its way, but on the central questions of East-West relations, American policy always made sure that the Allies were on board. The most crucial test in the 1980s occurred when deployment in Europe of Pershing II ballistic missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles was necessary to fulfill the NATO "dual-track" decision in response to the Soviet deployment of SS-20s. This was achieved despite strong public opposition, particularly in Germany, but the U.S. missiles in Europe gave Gorbachev an incentive to eliminate that class of weaponry. It also demonstrated to the Soviet leadership that they could not successfully drive a wedge between the United States and its European allies. In sum, while at times dealing with the Allies could be frustrating, as when they refused to apply effective economic sanctions on the Soviet Union following the invasion of Afghanistan and the declaration of martial law in Poland, but, by not pushing the Allies too hard on secondary issues, the U.S. succeeded in keeping the alliance solid when it came to those issues of primary concern. Multilateral diplomacy enhanced U.S. power rather than restricting it.

Chronic Regional Disputes

Are any of these "lessons" relevant to the issues today? So far as the approach to other countries is concerned, they are. (They are much less relevant in dealing with terrorist groups.) First of all, a willingness to engage adversaries is more likely to produce the results we desire than is the use of threats without direct communication. It is possible to change or moderate a regime's behavior by muscular diplomacy, but well nigh impossible to persuade it to commit suicide if the goal is "regime change." And though the United States still possesses the military might sufficient to remove the government of any "rogue regime," the occupation of Iraq has shown that it is more difficult to produce an effective government in a foreign country than it is to conquer it.

North Korea

Our experience in dealing with North Korea's nuclear aspirations seems to support the supposition that a combination of multilateral diplomacy and muscular direct diplomacy produces better results than isolation and threats, or multinational diplomacy alone. The situation in North Korea is still not acceptable, but the most dangerous period of nuclear development occurred when the United States refused direct talks with the North Korean regime. Creating the "group of six" was a positive step, but proved to be inadequate without the bilateral U.S.-North Korean talks. (The Chinese do not wish to have a nuclear-armed North Korea, but seem to fear the collapse of the North Korean regime more than a North Korea with some nuclear weapons.)

There is a natural aversion to providing any aid or support to a regime as tyrannical and erratic as the North Korean, or to paying a "price" for the correction of bad behavior. Nevertheless, it may be that the wisest policy in regard to North Korea is to provide enough support to reduce the sense of desperation and isolation on the part of Kim Jong-il and his cohorts. In no way does he, or his henchmen, "deserve" sympathy or support. However, our experience with East

Germany may be instructive: When Willy Brandt announced his "Ostpolitik," reversing the "Hallstein doctrine," many were shocked. How could one deal normally with the Soviet puppets in East Germany as if they were leaders of a normal state? If you give diplomatic recognition to the Soviet-sponsored occupation regime, you will be consigning Germany to perpetual division, they argued. But what happened? Most countries recognized the GDR, established embassies in East Berlin, and did not insist that the Berlin Wall come down or that it be made easier for East Germans to leave the country. Yet, as it turned out, legal recognition contained the seeds of destruction of the GDR regime, not assurance of its perpetuation. More human contacts were possible as a result of Ostpolitik, and by 1990, when the Soviet Union was no longer willing to support the GDR regime by force, its own people swept it out of power.

Kim Jong-il's North Korea is poorer, more tyrannical, more militarized, and more erratic than the GDR. But the sense of isolation and of foreign hostility feeds the most dangerous features of its behavior. If these pressures are eased and foreign aid helps avert a famine and total economic collapse, an orderly change in North Korean governance could eventually become possible. The United States would do well to work closely with South Korea, and be willing to consider withdrawal of U.S. military forces from the Korean Peninsula in return for a substantial reduction of North Korean deployments. Ultimately, a peace treaty and full diplomatic relations might be an appropriate quid pro quo for North Korea's abandonment of its nuclear weapons facilities and ending the export of missile technology. Diplomatic recognition would no more guarantee the perpetual division of the Korean Peninsula than recognition of the GDR guaranteed the perpetual division of Germany.

At the moment, the prospects for freezing the North Korean nuclear program look brighter than those for inhibiting the development of enrichment facilities in Iran. However, if current efforts fail and the North Koreans resume an active program, testing more weapons, pressures will rise for Japan and South Korea, and—depending on

China's reaction—Taiwan, to seek nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, at the moment the situation in East Asia seems more stable in this respect than that in the Middle East.

Iran

If we now look at Iran, we can surmise that it has probably been a mistake to avoid any broad, official dialogue with the Iranian regime. The implicit threat by including Iran in an "axis of evil" (when there was no evidence of an "axis") and postulating "regime change" as a goal, would have increased the determination of the more nationalistic faction in the Iranian government to develop its nuclear capacity. While, according to the most recent intelligence, Iran halted its weapons program in 2003, its insistence on expanding uranium enrichment suggests that it wishes to create conditions in which it could resume weaponization at some time in the future. Given Iranian attitudes, it is not unreasonable to surmise that all factions wish to preserve a future option to "go nuclear." Iran sees itself both as the standard-bearer of Shiism within the Islamic world and as a defender of Islam as regards the world outside. One of its neighbors, Pakistan, is an Islamic state with a Sunni-dominated government and has nuclear weapons. The main perceived "enemy" of Islam in the region is Israel, also a nuclear state. The principal non-Islamic nations whose influence in the region is resented and resisted by the Iranian regime are nuclear states: the United States, the U.K., and Russia. In Iranian eyes, since the other nuclear states seem to have accepted Pakistan's nuclear status (even with its record of proliferation!), what valid motive could they have for denying Iran that capability other than a desire to make it vulnerable to military intervention, as the lack of nuclear weapons made both Serbia and Iraq vulnerable to military attacks even though they had not threatened the attackers? Such would be the rationale of the current Iranian leaders—and the likely rationale of any, more democratic, replacement regime faced with the same geopolitical configuration. One does not have to agree with the rationale (indeed, should

not agree with it) to recognize that the perception is a reality that we must deal with if we are to avoid an Iran with nuclear weapons.

Nevertheless, the latest U.S. intelligence determination suggests that the international community has more time to deal with Iranian nuclear aspirations than many believed previously. Furthermore, the change of Iranian negotiators and charges against the Iranian diplomat who previously conducted negotiations on the issue suggests that nuclear policy is a matter of contention within the Iranian leadership. If that is the case, it should present opportunities for well-considered diplomacy, even though the intelligence report may make it more difficult in the immediate future to enlist international support for vigorous economic sanctions. Nevertheless, it should be possible to find ways to slow the expansion of enrichment facilities in Iran and make their activity more transparent by increasing Iranian coperation with IAEA inspectors. It will probably also be necessary for the U.S. to convince the Iranian leaders that they are not current targets for a military attack by the United States or Israel. (The most radical elements—those that support terrorism on religious grounds—would probably welcome a U.S. or Israeli air strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, since this would prove enormously helpful in recruiting terrorists and in securing nuclear technology from other countries—Pakistan, for example—on grounds of Islamic "solidarity.")

Iran's aspirations for its position and influence in the region will also have an influence on the willingness of any Iranian leadership to slow the development of its nuclear capability, or to reduce Iran's support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas. For this reason, it is important to engage the Iranians, both bilaterally and multilaterally, regarding important regional issues. Not all Iranian interests conflict with those of the United States. The Iranians, for example, do not want Afghanistan to fall back into the Taliban's grip (though, paradoxically, they seem to be providing some weapons now in an obvious attempt to weaken U.S. control); they are enemies of the fanatical Wahhabism that motivates Osama bin Laden and Al Qa'eda; they probably do not want the sectarian conflict in Iraq (some

of which they have encouraged) to spread and involve Arab countries such as Syria or Saudi Arabia. Such a conflict could infect the ethnic minorities in Iran itself.

Just as President Reagan was able, gradually, to find common interests with Gorbachev, and then to build on them, the U.S. should not dismiss the possibility *a priori* of finding some sort of *modus vivendi* with Iran. It will certainly not be easy or automatic, but if a concerted effort to engage the Iranians does not result in an indefinite suspension of the Iranian weapons program, that fact alone would help rally international support for vigorous sanctions—the prospect for which has improved with a change in the French position. The U.S. should also not assume that Russia is uncooperative in this respect just because Russia opposes any military action against Iran and has been reluctant to support extensive sanctions. (Essentially, the Russians have been saying what the U.S. intelligence community now reports—that there is no ongoing weaponization program in Iran.) Russia has some leverage over the Iranian program because of its provision of fuel for the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Russia, therefore, has the capacity to exert subtle, indirect pressure that, under some circumstances, may be more effective than formal sanctions. Most governments resist backing down under direct international pressure; yielding to the sort of indirect pressure Russia can exert is much easier since nobody has to admit that they backed down.

Pakistan-India

So far as Pakistan-Indian relations are concerned, the emergence of both as nuclear powers may have diminished the temptation to direct conflict. In fact, recent efforts to de-fuse the Kashmir stand-off have shown some limited success, even though some flare-ups continue, as when Indian troops fired on demonstrators in August 2008. Therefore, it would seem that neither has an incentive to consider eliminating its nuclear arsenals, particularly since India seems on the verge of obtaining some of the privileges of an NPT-authorized nuclear power. Therefore, while settlement of the long-standing dispute over Kashmir

is obviously desirable, an agreement to resolve the dispute is unlikely to diminish the desire of both countries to retain their nuclear arsenals.

The Pakistan "bomb" creates a special and serious potential problem. Whereas the Indian arsenal is presumably well secured, one cannot have the same confidence in the security of the Pakistani weapons if political conditions continue to deteriorate. Concern on this score arises not only because of the record of the Khan network of materiel and technology sales (illegal actions for which he has been pardoned), but also because the Pakistani weapons have been considered by much of the public as "Islamic" weapons, weapons for use in the service of their religion, not just for the preservation of Pakistan as a state. Furthermore, the Pakistani security organs contain elements sympathetic to radical Islam, including the Taliban (virtually created by the Pakistani intelligence service) and, by extension, Al Qa'eda. It is most troublesome that Osama bin Laden and the remnants of Al Qa'eda still apparently enjoy a refuge in the tribal areas of Pakistan. This fact alone would not necessarily give radical Islamists access to nuclear weapons or technology, but the current political turmoil in Pakistan could lead to a sharp deterioration in its government's ability to secure its nuclear assets.

The United States faces a dilemma in its dealings with Pakistan: it needs a strong, authoritative Pakistani government willing to confront the jihadists who are deeply entrenched in Pakistani society and, indeed, in some branches of the government itself. However, President Musharraf's actions in declaring martial law and making massive arrests of jurists and lawyers, as well as the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, produced a grave political crisis in 2007. Elections in 2008 eased the crisis but produced a parliament dominated by parties in opposition to President Musharraf. The coalition government formed following the election seems fragile and it is not clear that it will be effective in keeping Pakistan's radical Islamists in check.

The U.S. has no practical alternative to working with the new Pakistani government, the Pakistani military, and President Musharraf

to encourage effective steps to reduce the threat of Taliban and Al Qa'eda elements in the northern frontier border with Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the ability of the current government and military to deal with that threat is far from certain. Political instability in Pakistan provides another incentive to improve the dialogue with Iran. Admittedly, the idiocies perpetrated by President Ahmadinejad make this difficult indeed, but—as noted—there are common interests with Iran, and if problems should mount in Pakistan, it would be useful if we had a less emotion-charged relationship to Iran, as well as closer relations with India—which seem to be developing satisfactorily.

Israel/Lebanon/Syria and the Palestinians

There is little this paper can add to the billions of words that have been expressed over the years regarding the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Even if that dispute could be miraculously settled, it would not necessarily ease the potential of nuclear proliferation in the region, since—as we have seen in the case of Iran and Pakistan—many other factors are important. Nevertheless, since Israel is a nuclear power, a political settlement that resulted in peaceful relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors would diminish the importance of one reason (or pretext) some states in the region might have to acquire nuclear weapons. This argues for an active American diplomacy, and one that avoids automatic support for one side in the dispute. American influence is greatest when it can exercise some leverage over both parties.

The Israeli airstrike in September 2007 on an enrichment facility in Syria under construction with North Korean assistance may have ended, for the moment, early stages of a Syrian nuclear weapons program. However, it would seem that the myriad of tensions in the Middle East are conducive to further proliferation attempts unless rivalries and tensions in the region are tamed. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other states in the region have begun thinking of developing nuclear power, which could be a prelude to a weapons program. There needs to be more active diplomacy directed at settling the Golan Heights issue and some understanding regarding Syria's role and interests in

Lebanon. It is probably unrealistic to attempt to exclude Syria from any influence in Lebanon. But it may be possible to find ways to induce Syria to withdraw military support from Hezbollah in an overall settlement including the Golan Heights, Palestinian refugees, and a sharing of power within Lebanese politics. Without such a settlement, it would appear that the Syrian government will have a powerful incentive to try to acquire nuclear weapons, especially if the Iranian program continues apace. If that should happen, the spread of nuclear capability is unlikely to be limited to Iran and Syria alone.

Other Countries

At the moment, the spread of nuclear weapons to countries in Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Latin America seems a remote possibility. The danger could arise rapidly, however, in any of these regions if simmering disputes should get out of hand. In most instances, however, it would take years to develop an in-country capacity. The danger would be greater if a rogue state like North Korea was able to supply the weapons for a price. Sudan and Venezuela, for example, both with oil money, might under certain circumstances seek some nuclear weapons in the belief that their presence would deter foreign (particularly U.S.) military intervention. So far as this writer is aware, however, this possibility is more theoretical than immediate.

Russia, Its Neighborhood, and Nuclear Weapons

The breakup of the Soviet Union has produced a new arena for regional disputes, this time among those newly independent states or erstwhile members of the Warsaw Pact. These disputes, whether potential or actual, have a direct bearing on nuclear proliferation and on the reduction of nuclear weapons since they heavily influence Russia's attitude toward its nuclear arsenal and toward its willingness to cooperate with the United States in matters of nuclear security. With a nuclear arsenal comparable to the American in size, and with abundant fissile material and technical know-how, Russian active cooperation

is essential if we are to avoid further proliferation and/or leakage to criminal or terrorist organizations. (The Litvinenko murder in London is a reminder that dangerous nuclear materials can escape from Russian facilities—polonium, after all, can be used to trigger a nuclear device.)

Despite the importance of retaining active Russian cooperation on nuclear issues, American (and sometimes European) policy has, on many issues, undermined the Russian willingness to cooperate by seeming to ignore Russian national interests. In the Russian view (not balanced or necessarily accurate, but sincerely held), the United States set out to weaken Russia despite its liberation from Communism and breakup of the Soviet Union, pushing NATO eastward, even into parts of the former Soviet Union, bombing Serbia without UN Security Council approval, even though Serbia had not committed aggression against any NATO country, abrogating the ABM Treaty even when Russia was willing to amend it to permit development of defenses against ballistic missiles, eliminating on-site inspection from the latest nuclear reduction treaty (and planning to store rather than destroy the weapons subject to reduction). The complaints go on and need not be cataloged here except to observe that an absolute red line in Russian thinking was crossed when it seemed that the United States and other NATO members were scheming to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO.

The Russian thinking is one-sided, self-serving, and often places a sinister interpretation on innocent and reasonable acts. However, it is widely held and is not just an artifact of official propaganda, since these sentiments of wounded nationalism arose when the Russian media were free of government control. At the end of 1991, the United States was the most admired country by Russians—more than 80 percent of those polled were admirers. By 1998 and 1999, public opinion regarding the U.S. had changed, with 70 to 80 percent objecting to the U.S. use of force in the Balkans. Following the invasion of Iraq by the U.S.-led coalition, a majority of Russians have considered the United States the most “dangerous” country in the world.

Although recent polemics by President Putin have been sharp, the fact remains that U.S. and Russian security interests do not conflict at the most basic level, and in fact both countries need to cooperate if they are to improve their own security. We are not approaching a new Cold War of the sort we experienced from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, based on fundamental and profound ideological differences. The U.S.-Russian relationship can be turned into a more cooperative one in a relatively short period of time, given the right approach by the United States and the willingness of President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin to put some of the current disputes behind us now that the Russian electoral process has run its course.

Improved U.S.-Russian relations will require concentration on those issues where our interests coincide and willingness on the part of both American and Russian authorities to place less emphasis on secondary issues that are not of critical importance to either country's security. In particular, the U.S. must stop attempting to pass judgment on Russian internal governance, so long as it does not directly threaten others. If the Russians prefer a more authoritarian government than Americans or Western Europeans would tolerate, that is their business; if it turns out to be a disadvantage—as it eventually will—it is Russians who will suffer and who will have a motive to change the situation.

The second change in U.S. policy should be to remove itself from disputes between Russia and former republics of the Soviet Union other than those now in NATO. It makes no sense to plan bringing Ukraine into NATO, particularly when the majority of Ukrainian citizens do not want to be in NATO. Ukraine's security problem is internal; some 45 percent of the population (in the east and south) want a closer relationship with Russia and around 40 to 45 percent want looser ties to Russia and closer ties to Europe. Outsiders do no one a favor becoming involved in what is essentially an internal Ukrainian issue, particularly since Russian attempts to interfere in the process normally backfire and do Russian interests more harm than good.

Ukraine is big enough and strong enough to defend its sovereignty, and all significant political factions can be expected to do so.

The majority of Georgians doubtless want to be in NATO but it would be a mistake to bring Georgia into the alliance. (I say this with reluctance since I am a great admirer of the Georgian people and of Georgian culture—I am probably the only foreign diplomat not of Georgian descent who has actually delivered speeches in the Georgian language.) The problems Georgia has with South Ossetia and Abkhazia are not unlike the problems Serbia has with Kosovo. Georgian forces attempted to subdue the non-Georgian population by force in 1991 and 1992, and as a result, the local people, with Chechen and some Russian help, expelled the Georgians and with Russian support have managed to stay independent of Georgia.

Obviously, the Russian invasion of Georgia in August 2008 will make it much more difficult to resist Georgia's desire to enter NATO. Emotions on all sides are running high, but it is incumbent on policymakers to retain a clear concept of political and security priorities, particularly in times of crisis.

The fact is that Russia reacted to an attempt by Georgia to take by force the breakaway enclave of South Ossetia. This reckless action by Georgia's government provided the pretext Moscow sought to teach the Georgians and their backers a lesson. The Russian invasion was brutal and disproportionate to Georgia's offense. However, we should resist the tendency evident in much media comment to view Russia's reaction as a "war against democracy," or an undisguised act of imperialism.

In Russian eyes, the Georgians attempted in South Ossetia what Slobodan Milošević attempted in Kosovo in the 1990s. In the latter case, the U.S. led NATO in an attack on Serbia despite Russian objections and the lack of sanction by the United Nations Security Council. Subsequently, the U.S. and some of its NATO allies recognized Kosovo's independence over Russian objections and in violation of provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. At the time, Russia warned that

it would consider this as a precedent valid also for the "frozen conflicts" in former Soviet territory.

This does not excuse the Russian invation of Georgia, but it does make clear that Georgia must, at a minimum, refrain from using force to assert control over territories that were autonomous until Georgia unilaterally revoked their autonomy. (This had been Georgia's policy while Eduard Shevardnadze was president.) Most likely, Georgia will eventually have to recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in order to restore normal relations with Russia, just as Serbia is required to reconcile itself to the loss of Kosovo if it is to have cooperative relations with the Ruripean Union.

Russia has a practical interest in finding a way to make a reasonable peace with Georgia. If it attempts to occupy Georgian territory outside Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it risks widespread destabilization of the entire Caucasus region and a heightened risk of terrorism within Russia itself. The United States should use its influence to calm emotions on both sides and avoid being used in a futile Georgian effort to settle scores. America has too many vital interests that require Russian cooperation to involve itself in a messy local conflict, none of the parties to which have justice unequivocally on their side.

The tension between Moldova and the "Dniester Republic" is different in some respects, but also one that is remote from any discernible American security interest. Of course, the United States should continue to support the independence of all the former Soviet republics—something Russia does not challenge—but without giving Russia the impression that it is attempting to bring countries like Ukraine and Georgia into an anti-Russian military alliance. Imagine the American reaction if a European country, even a friendly one, tried to bring Mexico into a military alliance that excluded the United States! It would not consider that a friendly act, or one conducive to strategic cooperation with the perpetrator.

Other issues will of course affect Russia's willingness to return to policies leading to a nuclear-free world. The Russian government has taken strong exception to the plans to deploy missile interceptors

in Poland and battle-management radars in the Czech Republic. This issue seems to have been the principal stumbling block to Russian agreement on a joint program to develop and operate missile defenses. It would seem that the necessity and timing of these deployments should be reassessed and measured against the advantages Russia can offer in developing an effective missile defense system to meet potential threats from rogue states. If Gorbachev had been willing to offer President Reagan a joint SDI program at Reykjavík, Reagan might well have accepted. He did offer Gorbachev a treaty guarantee to "share" the defenses if they proved feasible—an offer Gorbachev rejected out of hand.[3]

The Russians have important assets, both technical and geographic, and former President Putin offered the use of Russian radars in a defensive system provided the U.S. dropped plans for the installation in Poland and the Czech Republic. A joint U.S.-Russian missile defense program could defuse the political suspicions that unilateral deployments engender. They could also contribute positively to the program. We should not forget that U.S.-Soviet cooperation in manning the international space station saved the program when, after the most recent shuttle disaster, the station had to be supplied by Russian launchers. It is likely that the bureaucracies in both countries will oppose a genuinely cooperative program, so it will take strong leadership by both presidents to make it happen.

There are other aspects of U.S. and Russian nuclear policy that need careful attention and review. Some of the important arms reduction treaties will be ending soon; both governments should act promptly to insure that there is continued cooperation in the nuclear area. No other area of the relationship is as important, and other issues

3. Most specialists in the American bureaucracy were adamantly opposed to this offer, but Reagan was genuine in making in. In one letter to Gorbachev which I drafted for Reagan, I attempted to make a weasel-worded offer (something like "consider sharing the benefits . . .") approved by the interagency group. Reagan sent the draft back twice with the notation: "No—tell him I want to share." The third time his note read, "Damn it, Jack, it's my letter and this is what I'm going to say," followed by the sentence that offered a treaty commitment to share defenses.

should not be allowed to diminish cooperation to create a world free of the nuclear threat.

What America Can Do to Help

It is important to the entire world for the United States to retain a strong military capacity, a healthy, productive economy, and a political system that commands widespread support. Over the long term, the United States can sustain this position only if it is willing act in concert with other powers, respects legitimate national interests of others, and seeks political solutions to disputes that arise. If we are to avoid further nuclear proliferation and the probability that terrorist groups will some day have the ability to detonate a nuclear device on U.S. territory, we must act in a comprehensive manner to *devalue* nuclear weapons as a source of political power, reduce drastically the number in existence, and create reliable control over those that remain. This will take years, probably decades, but so long as governments perceive that nuclear weapons will add to their power and prestige, or perhaps prevent a military attack on them, there will be regimes that attempt, covertly or openly, to acquire this capability.

A full discussion of the steps necessary to "devalue" nuclear weapons as a source of political influence or military deterrence is beyond the scope of this paper; they are mentioned only because they must provide a background to any successful effort to reduce the nuclear danger arising out of regional conflicts. One place to start would be to amend current strategic and nuclear doctrine to make it clear that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is intended solely for deterrence, not for the projection of force. Given the fact that U.S. "conventional" (that is, non-nuclear) forces are the most powerful in the world, it would be impossible to defend, on moral grounds, the use of nuclear weapons except for deterrence or retaliation. Their use by the United States for any other purpose would practically guarantee that someone, somewhere, would find a way to use such weapons against us.

Ever since the ill-fated Kellogg-Briand Pact, foreign policy specialists have been dubious about the value of sweeping, declaratory

policies. But, when such statements represent an actual policy, they can in fact be useful under certain circumstances. A good example is the agreement Reagan and Gorbachev made in their first meeting (Geneva, 1985) that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." Reagan had used this statement in several speeches, yet the Soviet leaders still suspected that the U.S. was possibly planning a disarming first strike. Subsequently, Soviet negotiators have stated in their memoirs that they considered Reagan's agreement to the statement an important achievement of the Geneva summit. U.S. negotiators also thought it important that Soviet negotiators would agree to a statement to that effect without mention of the ideologically loaded term "peaceful coexistence." The joint statement, therefore, provided a useful prelude to the arms reduction agreements reached subsequently. A restatement of this thought belongs in every American expression of strategic or nuclear doctrine, particularly since there is once again speculation that the United States may be "on the verge of attaining nuclear primacy" over Russia and China, combined with the capability of a disarming first strike.[4]

There is a need to reconsider the traditional American skepticism of nuclear-free zones. Although it may not be appropriate for the United States to propose nuclear-free zones for others, the U.S. should support regional efforts to create them where possible. The Treaty of Tlatelolco seems to have worked in Latin America. Nuclear-free zones in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia might inhibit proliferation in those areas in the event current conditions change. And how about a nuclear-limited zone in Northeast Asia, with China making a commitment not to expand its nuclear weapons capability in return for zero nuclear weapons in the Koreas and Japan and a Russian commitment not to base its weapons in its territories adjacent to China, Korea, and the Bering Sea?

4. See Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The End of MAD? The Nuclear Dimension of U.S. Primacy," *International Security*, Spring 2006, pp. 7–44. While I find this analysis unconvincing, the arguments are those that would be used in Russia, and perhaps China, to block further cooperation with the United States to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons.

The United States is more likely to be useful in solving regional disputes if it avoids total identification with one of the parties to a dispute. It is better to position ourselves to help in mediation by having some leverage over each of the parties. It is also not in the U.S. interest to try to do all of the "heavy lifting." We should share responsibility for keeping necessary change peaceful (more important than absolute stability, since that is impossible in an ever-changing world) with other powers in the area. As power shifts, so must responsibility, and the U.S. must be flexible in encouraging China, Japan, and India to shoulder an appropriate burden of peacekeeping in their region.

The U.S. policy of encouraging democratization has been widely misunderstood; it is probably an inappropriate slogan since each country must find its own way to create the institutions that make democracy work. A partial or (in Fareed Zakaria's words) "illiberal democracy" can be worse than the authoritarian system it replaces; as the ancient Greeks and our own founding fathers well understood, majority rule without restraining institutions can easily lead to mob rule and tyranny. The U.S. should do what it can to encourage "good government"—honest government that respects human rights and encourages economic growth—but must avoid acting as if it is the world's nanny. It can best encourage democratic government by showing how it works at home to the benefit of all Americans.

Booneville, Tennesee
August 14, 2008