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IMPEDING THE INEVITABLE – FUTURE U.S. POLICY FOR NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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Although technology has become increasingly efficient in detecting signs of proliferation, we cannot expect to develop a tool in the near future that will be able to detect the indicators of motivation – that is, that will be able to read the minds of the politicians and scientists whose desires can turn an apparent non-proliferator into a proliferator with great potential in a very short time. As Iraq recently demonstrated to the world, a nation with such a desire can make great clandestine strides toward a weapon, and the world will neither know about the terrible potential nor be able to stop it. Had Saddam Hussein been less intent on conquering the fertile crescent, which allowed the UN coalition to take aggressive action to stop him, he most likely would have been able to demonstrate his nuclear capability in a matter of a few years. The problem of nuclear proliferation must be explored in a way that will deter nations from wanting nuclear weapons at all. For the purpose of preventing nuclear weapons from becoming available to nations that do not currently have such capabilities, the definition of nuclear proliferation must include designing nuclear explosives, manufacturing or stockpiling weapons grade materials and technology, and transferring such explosives, materials and technology to non-nuclear weapons states.

There are several motives for a potential proliferator; I will address the following four and methods to counter such motives:

- 1) plans for actual use,
- 2) defense against another nuclear power,
- 3) adding to economic markets, and
- 4) balance and demonstration of international status and power.

Each impetus to proliferate will be affected by a different deterrent, so a policy intended to prevent proliferation must incorporate various approaches. Finally, a successful policy must be believed and must be supported by the international community.

1. Plans for Actual Use

Iraq may actually have planned to use a nuclear weapon, possibly on Israel or Iran. Attacking Iran with a nuclear weapon could put an end to a thousand year struggle between the two nations, just as a nuclear weapon ended W.W.II abruptly. If Iraq could force Israel into submission with the use of a nuclear weapon, it would repay Israel for her attack on Iraq's Osirak reactor while simultaneously launching Iraq to what it asserts is its historically rightful place as the leader of the area. However, if Iraq knew that she would suffer immedi-



ate major retaliation, and that she would never reap the benefits of such a show of power, she might realize that this is not a goal worthy of wasting her resources.

The mutual destruction assured by second strike capability on both sides is believed to have kept the US and the USSR from warring with each other directly, and especially from launching a nuclear weapon at the other. This idea could lead some to suppose that nuclear weapons stockpiles are the way to world peace through stalemates. The stability and logic of the governments of the US and USSR during the cold war were factors that made these two countries comfortable with such powerful stockpiles. In the bipolar world, these countries both had too much to lose to take the risk of launching a nuclear weapon. There are few non-nuclear weapons states that could rely on each others' governments' stability and logic enough to test such a stalemate. The balance that characterized the two superpowers is replaced by instability in a multipolar world, and the policy of mutually assured destruction is difficult to project onto any other two nations.

However, the responsibility of assured destruction could be taken by the U.S., which has a powerful enough stockpile to credibly destroy any nation in the world. If we had a clause in our non-proliferation policy stating that any nation exploding a nuclear weapon on foreign soil will suffer immediate retaliation by the U.S., with nuclear action implied, a nation might relinquish its ideas of targeting its weaker neighbor and might be deterred from pursuing a nuclear weapons program at all.

2. Defense Against a Nuclear Power

A motivation to proliferate corresponding to the previous one is defense from a nuclear weapons state. Iraq could conceivably have wanted a weapon to defend itself from Israel, which is assumed to possess nuclear weapons in spite of its refusal to confirm this. Israel was responsible for the bombing of Iraq's Osirak reactor, so Iraq may feel a tremendous threat. Through the same reasoning, we may expect Iran to be developing a nuclear weapon to counter the threat of Iraq, its ancient enemy.

Establishing trust between nations is the obvious way to combat this impetus for proliferation. We cannot simply decree that all nations shall trust one another, yet the goal is not as impossible as it sounds. Nuclear-free zones are a step toward this. Brazil and Argentina have shown that through a few years of trust-building processes, rival nations can apparently decide that their common goals do not make a nuclear weapons program worthwhile, and they will subject themselves to mutual inspections in order to continue this understanding. With a nation such as Israel, who will neither confirm nor deny their weapons program, this idea could not be taken seriously in the near future of the Middle East. It should remain a goal, however, and the processes of building trust among the Middle East nations through summits and inspections of some facili-

ties by neighbor nations, even if Israel abstains, would lead to greater stability in the area. The U.S. cannot force nations to get together to communicate and cooperate with each other, but it can encourage this.

An "assured destruction" plan by the U.S., as described in the above section for deterring an offensive attack, would also deter proliferation for defense. It would allow the defensive nation to reap the security benefits of a large and experienced program without spending its own capital or resources.

A corollary to this policy of "assured destruction," the current U.S. policy that states that the U.S. will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states without nuclear alliances must also be respected. Any security advantages that we can offer to a non-proliferator should be guaranteed.

3. Adding to Economic Markets

An impetus to pursue proliferation can also be economics. A nation in economic trouble may be able to become a major exporter of weapons. It is possible that Brazil, who has been a major supplier of weapons to third-world nations, may use nuclear technology to keep these markets open and expand them. Knowing that Iraq was interested in nuclear weapons, Brazil may have sold yellow cake, a form of uranium, in order to continue the sale of its conventional weapons. Brazil may have even wanted to develop a nuclear weapon that it could sell to its weapons clients at a phenomenal profit.

While one would hope that a nation would feel a sense of responsibility to the international community, and would also realize that they cannot be certain of the final user of nuclear weapons material and technology, promises of security for the supplier by the buyer could placate the fear of nuclear sabotage and international terrorism. The pride of a third world nation associated with rare exports of high value can also negate other responsible thought in regards to such materials.

Economic embargo would obviously be an appropriate response to any nation selling nuclear weapons technology or materials. Several organizations have been defining and clarifying what constitutes nuclear weapons technology and materials, and over the years have developed COCOM and the Zanger list. The Nuclear Suppliers Group is currently updating the list, which could be used to determine if economic embargo is justified. However, if a nation can sustain itself through sales of advanced technology in the face of an economic embargo by the US, the pride of demonstrating that the U.S. is not all-powerful may outweigh the inconvenience caused by finding alternative markets. If the embargo were carried out by the UN and the international financial organizations, however, it would carry much more force. The US could use its influence in the UN and as a major stockholder in such organizations as the International Monetary Fund to affect their policies toward nuclear weapons proliferators.

4. Balance and Demonstration of International Status and Power

A country like Iraq may choose to proliferate to show its superiority in a region. Iraqis assert that they are the rightful leaders of civilization, especially in the fertile crescent. Nuclear weapons could help other countries to accept this. Currently, the major decision makers in the international arena are the nuclear weapons states, which is one factor that encourages the idea that nuclear weapons indicate international influence.

The U.S. already takes action on nations which show indications of proliferation, with slaps on the hand like de marches. The U.S. could increase its force by steps such as halting aid to a proliferator while diverting the proliferator's share to its territorial rivals.

As each of these motives and possible U.S. actions to impede them are developed, it becomes increasingly obvious that the U.S. does not have the necessary power to stop a proliferant wannabee. It can make policy and take actions such as those discussed, and it could even take more controversial steps to inhibit the ability of nations to proliferate. For instance, the U.S. could have policy to attempt to destabilize governments that become stable enough to take on a commitment to a nuclear weapons program. However, international action may be the only reasonable way to impede proliferators. The U.S. now needs to use its influence to impact UN policy.

The International Coalition Against the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The UN was established in 1946 and it reflected the world situation at the end of W.W.II. The world has changed significantly since then, and the permanent five are no longer the five most influential nations in every other sense. The first step in reforming the UN to reflect today's world should be to establish a powerful non-nuclear weapons state as a permanent member of the Security Council, emphasizing its non-nuclear status as an important reason for its membership in the Permanent Six. Japan and Germany would both be excellent candidates because they are great economic powers and they have ambitions to become active members of the world community. Their economies had a much better chance to develop precisely because of they lacked an expensive and brain-draining military program. Either can be a great example of a non-nuclear weapons state becoming an influential and recognized world leader. A change in attitude on an international level may help leaders to resist the temptation of the ultimate power and status that has been implied in the past by nuclear weapons. It would change the implication as well.

The other policies that are outlined would be much more effective if they are adopted by the international community. Economic measures will carry significantly more force if they are supported by the UN as a whole, and if the IMF and other international financial institutions make policies that inhibit

proliferators. Finally, the policy of "assured second strike," in which the UN would support a coalition of nations which guarantee forceful retaliation for any nuclear attack on a foreign nation, can be applied and understood as international security.

Any policy or action taken by the U.S. on a foreign nation will be understood by other nations as imposing capitalist and hegemonic wishes on the world. If these policies regarding nuclear weapons proliferation could be incorporated into the UN's policies, they would be better respected by the would-be proliferators and would lead to a more powerful and united international community. This is a step toward the peace that could make proliferation an obsolete concern.