



Weapons of Mass Destruction

A New Paradigm for a New Century

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Summary

Arms control, the theory and practice guiding the decades-long effort by the United States and other nations to limit the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD), no longer works. A new paradigm is required for the United States and the world to be protected from mass destruction weapons. This essay examines the progress of US WMD policy since the end of the Cold War, and outlines the principles and rationale upon which a new, more appropriate policy might successfully be founded.

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INTRODUCTION

The May proposal by governor and presidential candidate George W. Bush to revamp the American nuclear posture by building robust defenses and slashing offensive nuclear forces, unilaterally if necessary, reinforces a trend that has been gaining strength throughout the 1990s. Arms control, the theory and practice guiding the decades-long effort by the United States and other nations to limit the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD), no longer works. A new paradigm is required for the United States and the world to be protected from mass destruction weapons.

In September 1999, the United States Senate killed the nuclear test ban, and with it much of the diplomatic construct intended to limit the spread of nuclear weapons. India and Pakistan joined the nuclear club only two years ago as the first declared members since China's initial nuclear blast in 1964. The United States-Russia bilateral treaties limiting these two countries' offensive nuclear weapons and missile defenses are on the precipice, awaiting the inauguration of a new US president to see if they can be revived. Odds are that neither treaty will exist two years from now. Nuclear dangers are only the beginning. Lethal biological and chemical weapons capabilities are spreading around the world, even to terrorist organizations. A treaty exists banning chemical weapons, but its implementation is lagging. A treaty also exists banning biological weapons, but it has no means of verifying that signatories are adhering to its terms. Hard evidence exists that Russia and other nations have violated both agreements on a massive scale. For the first time in decades, the world is faced with the prospect of an unbridled competition among diverse actors to acquire weapons capable of large-scale destruction.

This debacle has come about for many reasons. The world has changed radically over the past twenty years, but the theory and practice of arms control has remained stagnant. A decade after the Cold War, US policies on weapons of mass destruction are still mired in the conceptual precepts of that era. Doctrines and attitudes governing nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, efforts to stem the spread of these deadly capabilities, and plans to protect Americans from them are still viewed through the lens of the Cold War. In tone and texture, the doctrines and policies governing current US decisions on deployment of weapons of mass destruction, defensive techniques and technologies, as well as goals for diplomatic arrangements regarding the limitation of these weapons, are outdated. They are based on an obsolete view of international politics, and on an earlier phase of technological evolution. Such a framework is increasingly irrelevant to current problems. This "overhang" of Cold War thinking continues to cloud judgments and dictate unsound policies.

US WMD policy during the Cold War had one imperative: to deter Soviet aggression and, if necessary, to respond to Soviet military attacks. Deterrence, massive and ineluctable, was the linchpin of US policy. Unwilling to match Soviet conventional strength, the United States and its allies depended on the threat of initiating a nuclear exchange to deter war, in order to backstop their out-manned and out-gunned conventional capabilities. Large numbers of tactical

nuclear weapons were deployed in Europe and other locations, as well as on ships at sea, to make credible this threat to use nuclear weapons in response to conventional aggression. At the same time, US strategic forces were kept on hair-trigger alert with the capacity to fire when presented with clear evidence of an attack. Defenses against nuclear missile attack, on the other hand, were proscribed by treaty in order to underscore the calculus of deterrence.

In pursuing this robust deterrence strategy, the United States clearly accepted risks of inadvertent or accidental nuclear war. It also legitimated nuclear threats in the eyes of the world, delegitimated defenses, and drew attention to the potential utility of nuclear weapons as equalizers – limiting its ability to argue successfully against proliferation. Perhaps the times demanded this. The Soviet threat was clear and compelling: forces arrayed in strength as far west as Berlin, massive capabilities across the entire spectrum of weapons of mass destruction, an openly hostile ideology, and a tradition of territorial expansion.

The world of the Cold War is gone. Current US nuclear weapons policies respond to threats that have evaporated. With their passing also has gone the imperative of a robust, risk-taking nuclear deterrent posture. At the same time, new threats are emerging – threats which may or may not respond well to Cold War deterrent policies. Policies that may have deterred Soviet aggression are not necessarily effective against terrorists with biological weapons or emerging missile powers with nuclear warheads and ambitious regional agendas, or the possible new challenge from China. At the same time, the means available to combat threats have changed as well. For the first time, technology may be at hand to reliably defend against small missile forces. Advances in communications and information technologies provide means for like-minded nations to cooperatively identify, localize, and respond effectively to individual nations and groups planning terrorist actions. Precedents established in previous arms control arrangements provide the basis for far-reaching agreements prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, and the establishment of effective means to enforce them.

The contemporary threat of weapons of mass destruction is characterized by several imperatives of comparable seriousness in place of the single, overweening threat of the Soviet Union. Once a clear and present danger, the nuclear inheritance of the former Soviet Union now represents primarily a proliferation danger, with a secondary threat of accidental or inadvertent launch. With this central threat diminished, the United States is now free to concentrate on a wider range of challenges:

- Protecting US citizens and US allies from those weapons of mass destruction that already exist, whatever their national origin;
- Containing the further spread of weapons of mass destruction and the technologies which make them and their delivery vehicles widely available;
- Delegitimizing and eliminating chemical and biological weapons;

- Establishing controls on all nations' nuclear weapons and weapons-grade nuclear materials, as well as defining the processes and preconditions that could lead to their progressive reduction and eventual elimination.

These should be the goals of US policy. No other foreign policy goal is of comparable importance. For now and the foreseeable future, the most pressing direct foreign threat to the security of the United States is weapons of mass destruction in the hands of hostile powers. So long as these threats persist, and particularly if they are permitted to continue to intensify, all our accomplishments, and we as Americans, will be hostage to our enemies.

These imperatives constitute a very full agenda. The challenge is to make progress along several axes without compromising progress along any one axis. To do this, US policies on weapons of mass destruction must be considered two ways: 1) holistically—incorporating objectives with regard to all types of WMD—nuclear, chemical, and biological, and governing both offensive and defensive capabilities as well as the intelligence and communications systems that support them. 2) individually—regarding the mix of US forces and military strategy, as well as diplomatic and political arrangements that can be used to regulate and reduce all lethal capabilities with the potential for mass destruction. In this essay, we examine the progress of US WMD policy since the end of the Cold War, and outline the principles and rationale on which a new, more appropriate policy might be successfully founded.

THE FAILURE OF US WMD POLICY SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR

The history of US nuclear policy in the post-Cold War era began promisingly enough in the Bush Administration. Based on a review limited to a small number of senior officials, President Bush directed changes in the US nuclear posture. With the exception of ballistic missile submarines, nuclear weapons were removed from all ships at sea, and from overseas bases outside Europe. Within Europe, the number of nuclear weapons was drastically reduced. The fanciful Strategic Defense Initiative of the Reagan years was transformed into the more realistic Global Protection Against Limited Strikes program. The Bush Administration also signed START II, limiting US and Russian long-range nuclear forces to 3,500 warheads each. In addition, during this period Congress passed the Nunn-Lugar legislation, thus beginning a program through which the United States could help Russia secure its nuclear weapons and infrastructure.

The Clinton Administration maintained this momentum for a time. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin reached a symbolically important agreement in 1994 whereby US and Russian nuclear forces would no longer be targeted on each other's territory. In 1994, the Clinton Administration persuaded Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine to give up the nuclear weapons they had inherited from the Soviet Union and join the non-proliferation regime.

The START II Treaty was also ratified during President Clinton's first term. A reluctant US Senate, as a result of vigorous lobbying by President Clinton in 1997, ratified the treaty banning chemical weapons (CWC) completed in January 1989 by then Vice President Bush and signed in the waning days of his presidency. Largely the result of US leadership, in 1995 the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was extended indefinitely and in 1996 the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was signed after four decades of off-again, on-again negotiations. In 1994, North Korea was apparently persuaded to "give up" its nuclear program by signing the Framework Agreement.

Overall, however the Clinton Administration has not dealt successfully with WMD issues. The momentum toward reducing WMD dangers has dissipated. Implementation of the chemical weapons treaty is off to a poor start, and no discernible progress has been made toward containing biological weapon threats. Not only has progress toward reductions in US and Russian nuclear forces come to a halt, but, despite extension of the NPT, the complex regime intended to contain the spread of nuclear technologies is disintegrating. The nuclear club is expanding beyond the founding membership of the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China. As noted, two more nations—India and Pakistan—have declared their nuclear capabilities by conducting nuclear weapon tests. While never owning up to a test, that Israel deploys a nuclear arsenal is a secret to no one. Now, two more nations are knocking on the clubhouse door, Iran and North Korea. Iraq, on the verge of membership in 1990, is likely to be back again soon now that the United Nations no longer enforces its sanctions through on-site inspections. These potential accessions would bring the club's membership to eleven. Does proliferation stop there? If these trends are not reversed, will Japan remain the one non-nuclear nation in Northeast Asia indefinitely? Will Ukraine regret the decision to give up nuclear capabilities and take steps to regain them? What about middle powers, like Argentina and Brazil, who gave up nuclear weapon programs some years ago, but are watching the consequences of India's decisions closely?

Aside from the thrillers he read on vacation, President Clinton exhibited little interest in WMD issues, and even less interest in investing political capital to make progress on them. Two examples are indicative of this situation: the Nuclear Posture Review of 1993-94, and the CTBT ratification fiasco in 1999.

The Administration's one attempt at a comprehensive approach to nuclear issues, the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), concluded that the United States could not meet security requirements if it agreed to further reductions in nuclear forces beyond those mandated by START II. Though this conclusion has since been modified, adherence in the study to war implementation strategies emphasizing pre-planning and simultaneous execution of substantial attacks severely curtailed the possible lower limit of US forces, as well as the options considered for basing and operating the force. Moreover, NPR assumed that the United States would continue to rely on nuclear weapons for a variety of purposes beyond deterring the use of nuclear weapons by others, and explicitly rejected the view that further progress toward limiting

proliferation required that the nuclear powers abandon their efforts to use nuclear weapons to pursue objectives other than deterrence of nuclear threats.

Regarding the CTBT, the White House political operation, so formidable on most issues, made no effort to prepare for congressional debate on the treaty until the issue was actually joined. The Administration's apparent ignorance of the months-long effort by the Republican leadership to solidify ranks on the issue, its blunder in setting up Majority Leader Trent Lott to limit committee hearings and floor debate to less than two weeks on a controversial treaty that had taken four decades to negotiate, and an unprecedented, apparently ham-handed failure to yank the treaty before a vote could be held, would have been laughable if their consequences had not been so important. Indeed, the White House failed so uncharacteristically badly on this issue as to cause speculation that the CTBT was deliberately sacrificed to create an issue for the 2000 presidential campaign. Whether the Administration's behavior was the result of cynical design or simple malfeasance, defeat of the CTBT was a watershed in the history of efforts to control weapons of mass destruction, making it brutally evident that past policies had run their course and that a bold, new approach is required if the extraordinary dangers of these weapons are to be contained.

CONCEPTUAL BASIS FOR A NEW APPROACH TO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The first step toward more effective policies on weapons of mass destruction is to establish a more modern concept of these weapons and their role in world politics. Six tenets should stand at the center of the new terrain.

1. Russia can no longer be our sole, or even dominant focus

As opposed to the relative clarity of the Cold War period, the current era is complicated. We now live in a world that is no longer dominated by geo-political concerns. Sources of national power vary from economic assets to resources based on cultural and religious/ethnic allegiances. Usable military strength remains essential to a country's power position, but the conditions that define "usability"—particularly for Western nations—are becoming more narrow as values change and cultural and governmental institutions incorporate the lessons of the Twentieth Century's bloody history. In this world of fractionated power, threats to the well being of the United States and its allies come from many sources. In some sense, public fear over the WMD threat has receded in favor of a preoccupation with industry, commerce, and trade. The danger posed by WMD has become unreal to many Americans, the subject of movies and TV shows, not to be taken seriously. Notwithstanding these popular preoccupations, for now and the foreseeable

future, the primary direct threats to the security of the United States and its citizens at home are posed by hostile nations, groups, or individuals possessing nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

In addition, the world is now truly multi-polar, and no longer dominated by the US/Soviet struggle. Because the Soviets had the physical potential to destroy us, and at times Soviet leaders seemed to have the will to do so, the United States had no choice but to deal bilaterally with the Soviet Union on nuclear issues, and to elevate those discussions to the highest levels of government. From 1960 until the end of the eighties, nuclear weapons were often the dominant, and sometimes exclusive, issue at US-Soviet summit meetings. These days, only a residual direct threat remains from Russia, but a potentially maturing threat comes from China, and there are emerging threats in a few additional countries. The United States must deal with these new threats in a coordinated and tactically sound fashion. Russia clings to its bilateral arms control relationship as one of the few vestiges of its previous glory. For the United States in the new century, the old pattern of bilateral exchanges may have adverse effects, complicating relations with China and with allies in Europe and other regions. US policies concerning weapons of mass destruction must consider the whole of American foreign relations coherently and not accord exclusivity or even dominance to Russia.

2. Decisions on all types of weapons of mass destruction should be considered together

In seeking to contain the array of WMD threats, the United States must deal holistically with all three types of weapons although they are interrelated. Russia and China are believed to have all three kinds of weapons, although their chemical and biological weapons may no longer be operational. Some Arab nations see their chemical or biological weapon programs as a response to Israel's nuclear weapons. They therefore refuse to join the CWC or to consider curbs on biological weapons, unless Israel agrees to renounce nuclear capabilities. A nation's willingness to use chemical or biological weapons against US military forces may be affected by its perception that the United States could retaliate to such an attack with nuclear capabilities. Some argue that this perception deterred Saddam Hussein from using chemical or biological weapons during the Gulf War, for example.

Biological weapons are relatively easy to engineer and deploy, require smaller and less recognizable specialized facilities to manufacture than nuclear weapons, and are more efficient than either nuclear or chemical weapons as terror weapons—small quantities can kill large numbers of people. Thus, lethal quantities of biological weapons can be carried great distances by less capable missiles that would not have the payload capacity to carry a nuclear warhead the same distance. With less risk of detection than nuclear materials, crazed individuals or representatives of terrorist groups can also transport biological weapons on normal commercial carriers. For all of these reasons, biological weapons will likely be the mass terror weapon of

choice for most nations and groups. If US policy reduces nuclear dangers without also reducing biological threats, it will have failed.

3. Weapons of mass destruction are a relatively weak instrument in the US policy arsenal

As a vibrant democracy with strong regard for humanitarian values, the United States finds itself conflicted about its past use, current possession, and any future contemplated use of its nuclear arsenal. From the “ban-the-bomb” movement in the 1950s to the “freeze movement” spawned by deployment of the neutron bomb and intermediate-range nuclear missiles in the 1980s, major departures in US nuclear policy that acquired public visibility have become difficult political issues for both Democratic and Republican administrations. The threat of death and destruction on a mass scale is not a policy that finds ready political support in the United States. While the United States has maintained a robust nuclear deterrent for decades, any policy that stresses additional or more visible roles for WMD, or that seemingly diminishes efforts to control or eliminate such weapons, faces an uphill political battle if it comes to public attention.

In strategic terms as well, WMD redounds to the detriment of the United States. US military forces, as demonstrated in Desert Storm, Bosnia, and Kosovo, possess substantial advantages over any other state’s forces in conventional warfare. The combination of highly trained forces prepared to engage across the gamut of conventional war roles backed by overwhelming technological and material superiority clearly conveys a decisive edge to the United States. WMD are indiscriminate in application and based on what are now fifty-year-old technologies. They are neither “smart” nor “precise” weapons. They are, rather, potential “equalizers”—means of nullifying US military advantages, and obviating the need for the nearly impossible task of replicating US conventional forces, by threatening to kill large numbers of Americans.

These basic political and strategic facts-of-life suggest, *ipso facto*, that US policy should seek consistently to circumscribe the roles played by WMD in international relations. The fewer nations that possess such weapons, the less visible their role in international discourse, the less likely their use or threatened use in world crises, the more likely that US advantages in non-military instruments of power and in conventional military capabilities can be exercised on the world stage.

US policies and actions have an impact on this country’s ability to lead other nations toward the progressive delegitimation of WMD. For example, when the Senate rejected the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, US diplomatic efforts to persuade India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT, then on the edge of success, were set aside. In the end sovereign nations will decide what is in their own best interest and act accordingly, but the US ability to influence that self-evaluation is affected by what we say and do about WMD in our own policies.

4. The roles of weapons of mass destruction in US relations with other powerful states should be altered to reflect the changing nature of those relationships

The large, powerful states now at the heart of the international community have important stakes in the stability of the international order. None are interested in altering the status quo among themselves by force or the threat of force. Among these states' weapons, nuclear weapons are an inherited trust from the Cold War. Chemical and biological weapons are not part of their operational inventories, and use of these weapons by lesser powers and terrorist groups is an asymmetric threat that they all fear. The challenge for the great powers is to maintain their nuclear weapons in a responsible manner, gaining whatever residual security is inherent in their possession without running the risks of nuclear war or accidental/unauthorized use which were prevalent during the Cold War, and without complicating—through their own nuclear policies—efforts to turn the lesser powers away from weapons of mass destruction.

In a peculiar way, nuclear weapons have the potential to be a stabilizing force, or more precisely, cooperative measures to make positive disposition of these weapons can undergird a more genial international climate. During the Cold War, the nuclear postures enshrined in US/Soviet arms control agreements guaranteed each nation's ability to totally destroy the other. This was strangely appropriate, given the adversarial relationship of the two superpowers. In current circumstances, the United States and Russia, the United States and China, and Russia and China, while certainly not allies, are not enemies either. They are countries whose relations are in flux. Each country's leaders, while wary of the others, would like to see their relationships move in cooperative directions. Given the respective histories and politics of each country, as well as real conflicts of interest among them, this is a difficult endeavor. These three countries need to work out WMD postures covering both offensive and defensive forces and diplomatic arrangements that are appropriate for powerful states, with both shared and conflicting interests, that are moving towards closer ties. Eventually, Britain, France, and India, most prominently among others, will need to be brought into these arrangements as well.

These agreements should establish rules for continuing and transparent reductions in offensive forces, without prohibiting each great power from taking the steps necessary to protect itself from WMD threats posed by lesser powers. The weapons permitted to each power should be sufficient to serve their fundamental deterrent role, but not so great as to be perceived as signifying greater ambitions by the others. Coming to terms on that number will require significant and serious exchanges among these states. These discussions are more likely to move forward in a series of bilateral forums rather than in a single multilateral one, but either would suffice. Once such understandings are reached, they could be enshrined in formal agreements. Most important are the common understandings and the establishment of procedures permitting each state to be confident that it knows the capabilities and intentions of the others.

Hopefully, these steps would establish a norm, as well as a medium, for cooperation on these issues among the great powers. Ultimately, the arrangements among them may establish the principles for eliminating WMD all together, assuming that world politics evolve toward a more broadly cooperative and less conflictual international system. Though this goal is a long-term and decidedly uncertain end-state, working seriously toward its realization can only help the United States and the others in containing the spread of lethal capabilities to additional countries.

5. The United States should prevent lesser powers and non-state actors from gaining a capability to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction and, failing that, avail itself of all necessary means to defend against those who do

Regarding the lesser powers, there are only a few states that pose a problem. For now, North Korea, Iraq, and Iran are the most important; a few others might also be considered in this category. Hopefully, in the long run, the leaders of all three countries will be replaced and their successors will pursue more moderate policies. At such a point, these nations might also reenter the community of nations that eschew the use of weapons of mass destruction. Until then, the United States needs to protect itself and its allies from the threats posed by those countries. Through a variety of means, and with the assistance of others, each of these states possess and continue to develop weapons of mass destruction, along with the means of delivering such weapons over great distances. They each pose a threat to states in their vicinity and increasingly will pose a threat to the US homeland. The regional components of these threats need to be countered so that the differences in stakes will not cause the United States to be deterred from protecting its allies or interests in the region in the event of aggression. Potential uncountered threats to the US homeland could convey to these states the idea that by crude threat they could create latitude for themselves to act in ways inimical to US interests.

In seeking to contain these lesser powers, the United States can rely in part on the deterrent value of conventional forces. Having witnessed the destruction of the much-vaunted Iraqi war machine in 1991, and the successful NATO coercion of Serbian forces in 1999, only the most reckless leader would challenge the United States in a conventional war. Will this favorable circumstance change as hostile nations achieve capabilities to attack US forces in the region, or the United States itself, with weapons of mass destruction? It is difficult to say for certain. Does the intrinsic US ability to retaliate with nuclear weapons against any WMD attack strengthen the deterrent potential of our conventional forces? Probably, but again, no one can say for sure.

No one knows whether nuclear deterrence worked or not during the Cold War. At best we can say that it did not fail. Nor can we know the degree to which the threat of nuclear retaliation or fear of nuclear war contributed to the resolution of any specific incident in the past; we can only speculate. More to the point, the effectiveness of nuclear deterrent threats in future situations is inherently uncertain—depending on unknowable variables like the values,

knowledge, and perceptions of key decision-makers at the time. One thing we do know about the deterrent relationship at the heart of the Cold War was that it existed between two continental superpowers without a history of significant bloodshed between them. Ideology aside, both were compelled by the very stakes of their competition to exercise caution in direct confrontations. None of these stabilizing factors are present in US relations with the emerging WMD powers. In all three cases, there is a visceral dislike, a history of bloodshed, and political benefit for their leaders in creating crises. In all three cases, as well, there are salient territorial ambitions that have been thwarted in the past by US interventions. And in all three nations, there are leaders whose understanding of US capabilities may be limited, who may or may not receive accurate information about the region and events around them, who potentially perceive narrowing options, and whose desperate actions at a time of crisis could not be predicted with any confidence.

Given this intrinsic uncertainty about deterrence, it seems only logical, if the technological potential exists, to supplement deterrence with an array of defenses against WMD. Planning such defenses must take into account all potential means of delivery—missiles, military aircraft, and such unconventional means as smugglers and commercial aircraft. That said, the possibility of alternative means of delivery does not negate the value of building effective defenses against some means of delivery. Having windows in one's house is not an argument to leave the front door unlocked. Governments, moreover, and especially dictatorships like those in Iraq and North Korea, like to be confident that they can control the pace and exercise of any initiative, and to orchestrate the ploy with other arms of policy. For these reasons, predictable delivery modes under the control of politically reliable forces, i.e. military aircraft, ships, and missiles, are the most likely WMD threats and the most important to counter. Non-state actors will, by definition, forego such regularities, but that fact argues for increased defense measures along a number of axes, not for abnegation of feasible defenses against recognizable military platforms.

6. Defenses against WMD should be multi-layered to address a multi-faceted threat

The first line of defense is diplomacy. The United States should work whenever possible to help nations and groups in troubled regions to resolve their differences. For example, if successful, the persistent efforts by the United States to encourage Palestinian-Israeli peace will probably in the long term to be the most important measure the United States took to reduce WMD threats during the past ten years.

The next line of defense is intelligence and police work. Working in cooperation with other nations, the United States could do much to identify, isolate, and disrupt efforts by foreign nations and groups to acquire or to use WMD. Despite the importance of this objective, and the rhetorical attention paid to it in recent years, there have been suggestions by well-informed

groups like the 1998 Rumsfeld Commission that US intelligence assets are not allocated as substantially to this objective as might be desired. Bureaucratic issues and rivalries among ostensibly allied nations' may also be slowing progress. These problems may be on the way to correction. If not, any future administration should certainly insist that they be resolved.

The third line of defense is to maintain effective pre-emptive capabilities. Known euphemistically by the US military as counter-proliferation, this mission is difficult to accomplish, as demonstrated by the limited success of the US armed forces in seeking to find and destroy Iraq's mobile missile launchers during the Gulf War. However, technological advances offer considerable potential to strengthen US capabilities in this regard, and should be pursued as a matter of the highest priority. There have been suggestions that the power of more traditional missions within the US armed forces has made it difficult to find adequate funds for counter-proliferation. Again, no future Administration should tolerate such bureaucratic delays.

The fourth line of defense is passive defense. While the type of massive civil defense program once believed necessary for nuclear threats is neither appropriate nor feasible today, selective passive measures could be implemented with relatively small expenditures. Local emergency forces, so-called "first responders," are being trained for massive casualties resulting from chemical or biological attacks. The National Guard could be given a much larger role in preparing for these contingencies. The US Government could stockpile such passive defense equipment as vaccines and masks, seek to encourage building codes which would make new buildings at least capable of providing protection from most chemical and biological weapon threats, and do many other things of reasonable cost and little political disruption.

Fifth, and finally, the United States should develop and deploy when ready theater air and missile defenses, as well as national missile defenses. The former, intended to defend allies and US forces in overseas conflicts, raise no significant complicating political issues, with the single exception of China's concern that Taiwan not be included in any such system. National missile defenses, on the other hand, raise considerable political complications. Potentially they could challenge the Cold War maxim, enshrined in US and Russian force postures and in the 1972 Treaty Limiting Anti-ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), that the path away from war is for each of the major powers to be permitted to maintain the capability to totally destroy one another.

As we have noted, this posture is no longer appropriate. The major powers are seeking to build friendly relationships. Maintaining the capability to devastate one another inevitably constrains their relations and inhibits the degree of cooperation they can attain. The major powers, therefore, should begin a dialogue seeking to define a new concept for weapons of mass destruction in their mutual relations. This concept would redefine appropriate offensive and defensive postures, as well as the diplomatic arrangements that surround them. Reaching such an understanding may take many years. However, the United States should not wait until that dialogue leads to concrete results to begin defending itself against WMD in the hands of lesser powers or hostile groups.

For the next ten to twenty years, relevant technologies are not likely to advance enough to make available national missile defenses capable of defending reliably against more than small and relatively unsophisticated missile forces, usually defined as “tens” or “dozens” of warheads. This means that Russia, and China, as it deploys its new generation of mobile missiles, can be confident of retaining their respective deterrents. As the United States develops and deploys a limited missile defense system, it should take steps to make clear its limitations to both China and Russia by exchanging information on technical capabilities, permitting observers at tests, etc. The United States also should engage both Russia and China, preferably together, in talks on developing a common defense system, beginning with a common system for sharing missile launch warning data. In this way, the United States can both protect itself against the lesser emerging WMD powers and work with the major powers to continue to contain the role of WMD in their mutual relations.

A NEW US DOCTRINE FOR WMD

Cold War arms control, the basic purpose of which was to ensure that the superpowers could devastate each other, is no longer relevant. The major powers’ force postures—offensive and defensive—are outmoded, and guided by concepts that make no sense in the modern world. Existing arms control agreements are preventing the United States from shaping the force posture most analysts believe it needs. Such a stance would include a combination of fewer offensive weapons and the addition of some defensive capabilities. The next Administration should launch a major initiative to rethink US planning for WMD, and to persuade other nations to join in a past due effort to reshape WMD policy.

Six precepts should guide US doctrine governing weapons of mass destruction in the new century. Some are familiar, sound policies that should continue to be pursued. Others represent significant departures from current policies.

1. The United States should continue to seek the elimination of all lethal chemical and biological weapons. The United States can continue to pledge, as specified in the treaties to which it is party, that it will destroy all such weapons now in its inventory and that it will never acquire such capabilities again. In support of this precept, the United States should work systematically to persuade all states to sign and ratify the CW and BW treaties, to ensure the effective implementation of the former, and to strengthen the latter by negotiating a verification annex. This process will take time, and some states will hold out, overtly or covertly, as they await further progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, but US leadership and priority are essential to make any progress.
2. For the foreseeable future, the United States should continue to retain a modest force of nuclear weapons, but pledge not to use, nor threaten the use of, its nuclear

weapons against any nation that does not possess weapons of mass destruction, and that does not sanction their use by other nations on its behalf. This no-first-use pledge in the absence of WMD threats or use would move toward a long-standing demand of China and other nations, greatly strengthening US efforts to persuade those states to enter into a dialogue on other diplomatic initiatives preferred by the United States. However, the statement of no first use against WMD, instead of the usual formula restricted to no-first-use against nuclear weapons, would make clear the hoped for deterrent effect of US nuclear capabilities against all forms of WMD.

3. The sole role of US nuclear weapons should be to deter the use of WMD by others. US policy should clearly state that when confronted by a nation possessing weapons of mass destruction, whether directly or as a result of its support for others, the United States reserves the right to utilize its nuclear arsenal to defend its territory and vital interests and, if attacked, to retaliate with devastating force against the attacker. The US force posture should be structured to ensure this capability against all threats, both realistic and potential.
4. Having circumscribed the role of nuclear weapons in this way, the United States should quickly, substantially, and unilaterally reduce its nuclear arsenal in accordance with this guidance. This concrete step to reduce deployed nuclear forces would re-establish momentum and US leadership in reducing WMD dangers, and communicate the seriousness and resolve of the United States while in no way reducing US security.
5. In a departure from current policy, the United States should state that if deterrence fails, the United States will defend its territory, allies, and vital interests from WMD attack by all available means, including diplomacy, covert actions, cooperation with the police and intelligence of other countries, the development and deployment of active and passive defenses, and—in certain circumstances—through the preemptive use of conventional military capabilities. This policy departure will require significant changes in the plans and resource allocations of the Defense Department and other agencies.
6. Finally, as part of its WMD doctrine, the United States should continue to seek to strengthen the multinational regime of treaties, agreements, and organizations working to limit the proliferation of WMD capabilities and, as feasible, to progressively eliminate such capabilities that exist already.

With this doctrine as background, the United States could implement a comprehensive policy covering US military and intelligence programs, as well as diplomatic initiatives that could greatly strengthen American national security.

Multinational efforts to eliminate chemical and biological weapons should be continued and given higher priority. Cooperative measures to identify, isolate, and disrupt access to these weapons by uncooperative nations and terrorist organizations should be accelerated and given resources commensurate with their vital importance. Cooperative arrangements among both national governments and multinational organizations, like the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons, will be helpful in this struggle. These forms of international cooperation should be strengthened.

The United States should reconsider the size and structure of its offensive nuclear forces in light of the narrow role ascribed to such weapons in the new doctrine. The deterrence of chemical and biological weapons attacks should be considered part of the deterrent mission. For political reasons, US nuclear forces should not be kept at levels larger than militarily necessary. Nor should the United States be constrained in sizing its forces by the absence of agreements with other states. The United States should determine needs for the deterrent role and restructure the force posture accordingly. Eventually, agreements that accounted for and constrained all nuclear nations' forces and weapons-grade materials might reduce deterrent needs, and should thus be pursued as feasible. Currently desirable reductions in US forces should not be delayed by the difficulty of making progress in negotiations.

The United States should continue to develop theater and national missile defenses and deploy them as the technology matures. Feasible defensive capabilities cannot threaten the evolving deterrents of Russia and China for many years, and these nations' politically motivated protests should not be permitted to disrupt US deployment plans. If feasible, the United States should be willing to amend the ABM Treaty with Russia to make possible the national missile defense deployments planned for the near-term without major political fall-out. If the Russians fail to cooperate, the United States should be prepared to withdraw from the agreement. The United States should also take passive measures to better prepare itself for biological or chemical attacks. It should prepare its conventional forces for potentially necessary pre-emptive missions against nations and groups possessing weapons of mass destruction and hatching plans to use them. US intelligence resources, as well as police and intelligence cooperation with friendly nations, should be organized and allocated resources to maximize the potential to learn of such activities in a timely manner.

The United States should enter a dialogue with Russia and China, together if possible, separately if so required, to redefine the framework for decisions on WMD weapons and both offensive and defensive forces. Other major powers eventually should be brought into these talks. As defensive systems are developed, measures should be taken to assure Russia and China of the capabilities of US missile defenses in the near to mid term, and to begin the design of a common missile defense system, beginning with shared early warning capabilities.

The current US approach to nuclear policy, with its emphasis on maintaining robust offensive forces for deterrence, and a prohibition on significant defenses, stands logic on its head. It encourages the deployment of deadly weapons and prevents the creation of effective means of

defending against them. As security policy, it is a historic aberration whose roots lay in weakness. The United States deterred because it could not defend. The origins of this policy were necessity, not choice. Now, however, the United States has the chance to restore a more coherent balance between offense and defense. The demise of the Soviet Union and advances in defensive technologies offer a new path. There is the opportunity now to move back to a logical policy, one that seeks a more stable and secure posture for the United States and, indeed, the world—a world in which there are fewer and fewer weapons of mass destruction and more and more effective defenses.

Radical changes in policy cannot be implemented quickly or painlessly. It will take a major initiative, considerable political capital, and years of dialogue to get governments, including the United States, moving on this agenda. There will be false starts and policy failures. Given the stakes, however, it would be nothing short of irresponsible for the next US administration to allow US policy on weapons of mass destruction to continue to drift as it has in the recent past.