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Politics over Promise

Domestic Impediments to Arms Control

Steven E. Miller

Disappointment with negotiated arms control as it has been practiced over the past two decades is widespread and is found as much among proponents as among critics. This disappointment, caused largely by the decade-long failure to achieve telling limitations on strategic offensive nuclear forces, has spawned a veritable cottage industry of writings on the future of arms control, writings which seek new, more fruitful approaches to arms control or new recipes for success in given negotiations. Lavish attention has been given to the problem of rethinking, restructuring, restarting, fixing, or otherwise improving the prospects for and the effectiveness of negotiated arms control.[1] Serious debate has erupted over whether the problem has been that arms control has been asked to do too much or too little.[2] Analysts have struggled for new

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1. For a taste of this voluminous literature, see, for example, Barry M. Blechman, "Do Negotiated Arms Limitations Have a Future?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Fall 1980), pp. 102–125; Christoph Bertram, "Rethinking Arms Control," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Winter 1980/1981), pp. 352–365; Alton Frye, "How to Fix SALT," *Foreign Policy*, Number 39 (Summer 1980), pp. 59–73; Jane M.O. Sharp, "Restructuring the SALT Dialogue," *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Winter 1981/1982), pp. 144–176; and Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "ReStarting Arms Control," *Foreign Policy*, Number 47 (Summer 1982), pp. 98–113. Between 1978 and 1981 the International Institute for Strategic Studies, in London, weighed in with four relevant monographs: Christoph Bertram, ed., *The Future of Arms Control (Part I): Beyond SALT II*, Adelphi Paper No. 141, Spring 1978; Christoph Bertram, *The Future of Arms Control (Part II): Arms Control and Technological Change—Elements of a New Approach*, Adelphi Paper No. 146, Summer 1978; Jonathan Alford, ed., *The Future of Arms Control (Part III): Confidence-Building Measures*, Adelphi Paper No. 149, Spring 1979; and Farooq Hussain, *The Future of Arms Control (Part IV): The Impact of Weapons Test Restrictions*, Adelphi Paper No. 165, Spring 1981. See also the exchange between Leslie Gelb and Richard Burt, "The Future of Arms Control: A Glass Half Full" and "The Future of Arms Control: Or Half Empty," *Foreign Policy*, Number 36 (Fall 1979), pp. 21–48.
2. William Safire has amusingly captured this debate as one between "the baby-steppers" and "the giant-steppers." See "The Baby-Steppers," *The New York Times*, February 7, 1983. The case for "baby steps" is clearly made in Leslie H. Gelb, "A Practical Way to Arms Control," *The New York Times Magazine*, June 5, 1983, pp. 40–42.

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formulae that might permit the arms control impasse to be broken.[3] A public movement has rallied around the idea that a comprehensive nuclear freeze is the most effective means of imposing restraint on the nuclear arms competition.

A common premise of this outpouring of effort and ideas is that further attention to the substantive issues of arms control will yield answers that will somehow make possible significant progress. But the arms control process has never wanted for ideas and proposals, only for success and impact. New ideas and new proposals are unlikely to change that fact.

Largely unconfronted in any systematic way in the current disarray with respect to arms control is one overriding, fundamentally important reality: that the promise of arms control as an instrument of national security policy has been stunted as much by domestic political factors as by any other. Indeed, the lesson that emerges most strongly from the record of the past twenty-five years is that domestic political impediments to negotiated arms control regularly triumph over its substantive possibilities.[4] There are, of course, other serious obstacles: the Soviet Union is a notoriously difficult negotiating partner, obstinate, opaque, and inflexible; the asymmetric forces possessed by the two sides complicate negotiations; the march of technology raises hard, sometimes seemingly intractable negotiating problems; and, on the American side, at least, the sensibilities of allies must be taken into account. But these have not proven insurmountable.

Nor is it true to say that the domestic side of arms control has been completely neglected, for there are studies that analyze in great detail particular aspects of this problem (and there are political efforts that seek to address parts of the problem, as the nuclear freeze movement now attempts

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3. An interesting example of this genre is Sidney F. Drell and Kent F. Wisner, "A New Formula for Arms Control," *International Security*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 1980/1981), pp. 186–194. Eight recent proposals are analyzed in Michael Krepon, "Assessing Strategic Arms Reduction Proposals," *World Politics*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (January 1983), pp. 216–244.
4. This may well be as true for the Soviet Union as for the United States. Because little is known about the politics of arms control within the Soviet Union, however, this essay will focus on the American political scene. For some evidence on the Soviet side of the equation, see David Holloway, *War, Militarism, and the Soviet State*, World Order Models Project, Working Paper Number 17 (1981), which examines obstacles to disarmament in the Soviet system; and Rose Gottemoeller, "Decisionmaking for Arms Limitation in the Soviet Union," in Hans Guenter Brauch and Duncan L. Clarke, eds., *Decisionmaking for Arms Limitation: Assessment and Prospects* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1983), pp. 53–80. Suggestive on this point is the Soviet claim, made privately to the Carter Administration, that Brezhnev had "spilled political blood" in order to achieve the Vladivostok Accord and consequently could not easily depart from it, as the Carter Administration had proposed in March 1977. See Strobe Talbott, *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 73.

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to mobilize public support for arms control).[5] Nonetheless, although there exists a vast literature on all manner of substantive and historical aspects of arms control, there are relatively few treatments, in the early literature on the subject or subsequently, of the political side of the question, that analyze how winning political coalitions can be built in support of effective arms control.[6] This is a debilitating oversight in the theory of arms control, for time and again it turns out to be the case that greater achievements for arms control have been prevented by domestic calculations. Thus, for example, President Kennedy desired a comprehensive test ban, but settled for the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 because he could not persuade the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) to support the comprehensive treaty and believed he could not win Senate ratification without JCS support.[7] President Nixon and National Security Assistant Henry Kissinger did not pursue a ban on multiple warheads (MIRVs) in SALT I in part at least because Secretary of Defense Laird and the JCS were strongly opposed, and Nixon and Kissinger felt that the price of gaining their support would be too high.[8] More recently, Presi-

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5. A notable example is the work of Duncan Clarke. See his *Politics of Arms Control: The Role and Effectiveness of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency* (New York: The Free Press, 1979); and "Integrating Arms Control, Defense, and Foreign Policy in the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government," in Brauch and Clarke, eds., *Decisionmaking for Arms Limitation*, pp. 3–36. See also John H. Barton, *The Politics of Peace: An Evaluation of Arms Control* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981), especially pp. 73–104; and William H. Kincade, "Arms Control in the 1980s," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1981, pp. 145–163. It ought to be noted that theories linking domestic factors to foreign policy outcomes have a substantial place in the broader international relations literature. For a recent, thoughtful, sustained argument about the impact of domestic considerations on policy outcomes, see Fen Osler Hampson, "Fraught with Risk: Canadian and Mexican Oil Policies" (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1982).
6. Support for this assertion may be found in Dan Caldwell, "Bibliography on Contemporary Arms Control and Disarmament," Working Paper No. 7 (Providence, R.I.: The Center for Foreign Policy Development, Brown University, August 1983).
7. See Tom Wicker, "A Tale of Two Risks," *The New York Times*, November 21, 1983. For a substantial account of the domestic difficulties faced by Kennedy in the test ban issue, see Bernard J. Firestone, *The Quest for Nuclear Stability: John F. Kennedy and the Soviet Union* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982). A first-hand account of the internal deliberations on this issue may be found in Glenn T. Seaborg with Benjamin S. Loeb, *Kennedy, Khrushchev, and the Test Ban* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1983).
8. Evidence on this point can be found in Seymour M. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983), pp. 155, 166. Kissinger himself notes the passionate support for MIRV in the Pentagon, but blames the Soviets for preventing serious discussion of limits on multiple warheads. See his *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), pp. 540–546. This was an issue about which SALT negotiator Gerard Smith had strong feelings, and his conclusion, offered with regret, was that "we had not been willing seriously to negotiate for a MIRV ban," largely, Smith believes, because the U.S. military had no interest in doing so. See his *Doubletalk: The Story of the First Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1980), pp. 156–157.

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dent Carter was unable to obtain the ratification of SALT II, the product of seven years of negotiation under three presidents, because the level of domestic opposition was so high.

In short, domestic factors constitute a large part of the explanation of why the harvest of arms control has been disappointing. This suggests that the prospects for successful arms control in the future will be contingent on finding ways to manage the political process in order to overcome or circumvent political impediments. These impediments, it should be noted, are not entirely negative, for they protect the United States from bad agreements. But they also deny it good agreements and prevent arms control from playing a more constructive role in its national security policy. If, as most seem to believe, arms control can contribute to Western security by constraining threats, enhancing the stability of the military balance, and possibly reducing the risk of war, then American interests will be served by the identification of strategies that will allow a wider latitude for arms control in the domestic arena. Since the impediments are many, and in many instances are inherent to the workings of the political systems of the superpowers, it will not be easy to identify such strategies. Until this problem is widely recognized and addressed, however, it will be impossible to move beyond the heretofore unsatisfying (though not totally unsuccessful) record of arms control.

The Modern Theory of Arms Control

The intellectual foundations of arms control in the nuclear age were laid more than twenty years ago and have scarcely been modified since.[9] Except insofar

9. In one extraordinary year, 1961, there were published four books which still constitute the basic core of thought on arms control. The discussion which follows is based primarily on a reading of them. The books are: Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1969); Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race: Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age* (New York: Praeger Publishers, for the International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1961); Donald G. Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security* (New York: George Braziller, 1961); and Arthur T. Hadley, *The Nation's Safety and Arms Control* (New York: Viking Press, 1961). Also published in 1961 were Louis Henkin, ed., *Arms Control: Issues for the Public* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1961); and David Frisch, ed., *Arms Reduction: Program and Issues* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961). Two other books narrowly missed augmenting the outpouring of volumes on arms control in 1961: Ernest W. Lefever, ed., *Arms and Arms Control* (New York: Praeger, 1962); and Seymour Melman, ed., *Disarmament: Its Politics and Economics* (Boston, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1962). For an analysis of the emergence of the theory of arms control in this period, see Lawrence Freedman's chapter "Arms Control," in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 190–207. For brief reference to some of the periodical literature on arms control in this period, see Steven E. Miller, "Arms Control and Surprise Attack: Into the 1980s," *Arms Control*, September 1981, pp. 136–140.

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as it was noted that there are unilateral measures that advance the purposes of arms control, very little attention was given to its domestic politics.[10] The central preoccupation was rather on the potential value of and the substantive prerequisites for serious negotiations. The scholars and analysts who wrote on this subject in the late 1950s and early 1960s had one overriding aim: to make the case that negotiated arms control could bring welcome benefits, that even the bitterest of antagonists might share an interest in avoiding war, that cooperative arms control measures held promise of reducing the risk of war, that the pursuit of arms control was an act of self-interest rather than of altruism, and that the substantive obstacles to achieving all of this were not insurmountable. The premise of these writings, as Schelling and Halperin put it in 1961, was that "arms control is a promising, but still only dimly perceived, enlargement of the scope of our military strategy."[11]

Much of this early work on arms control was devoted to demonstrating its potential benefits by showing that there existed plausible arms control solutions to pressing security concerns. Arms control, it was said, could reduce, if not eliminate, the incentives to strike first and so rid the strategic relationship of dangerous fears of surprise attack. It could diminish the chances of accidental or inadvertent war. It would inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons. In general, arms control was offered as a potential means of enhancing the stability, and thereby increasing the safety, of the nuclear balance, and the early theorists of nuclear arms control were keen to explain how it was that it could be so. It is a measure of how far we have come that these notions now seem commonplace. In 1961, they were largely alien to a political environment of highly charged Soviet–American rivalry in which exchanges over disarmament had usually been nothing more than hollow contests in rhetoric.

But to be persuasive, arms control proponents had to do more than just prove that arms control could be useful; they also had to show that it was feasible. This, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, was a harder task. It entailed addressing the two major obstacles to arms control: the difficulty in achieving an effective means of monitoring compliance and the daunting prospect of dealing with the Soviet Union as a negotiating partner.

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10. The Brennan volume, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security*, does have several essays (out of more than two dozen) that address aspects of the political problem. See particularly Ithiel De Sola Pool, "Public Opinion and the Control of Armaments," pp. 333–346; and Saville R. Davis, "Recent Policy Making in the United States Government," pp. 379–390.
11. Schelling and Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control*, p. 1.

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Of the two, the more vexing was the question of inspection—or, as it is now called, verification. The Soviet Union is a closed and hostile society. America's capacity to gather intelligence, especially in the pre-satellite days, was limited and certainly far from providing the systematic coverage of Soviet behavior that would be necessary to monitor compliance with a treaty. How, then, was the United States to tell whether or not the Soviet Union was cheating? This was no idle matter since, as Jerome Wiesner wrote, "Many Western experts believe that it would be possible for a decisive missile force to be built up behind the Soviet security screen with little danger of detection. The fear of Soviet duplicity is so great among some Western experts who participate in disarmament planning that it is not possible to visualize a level of inspection which would actually alleviate this fear."[12] So to this problem the arms control pioneers of twenty years ago gave considerable attention, devising clever schemes of inspection and surveillance in an effort to surmount it.[13] They envisioned extensive use of various forms of on-site inspection—of factories, of military installations, and even of budget, production, and inventory records—combined with aerial reconnaissance, interrogation of key personnel, and perhaps even the creation of an international intelligence network for detecting violations of agreements.[14] Some such scheme would suffice, it was hoped, to make international arms control possible.

But even if adequate means of verification were available, would the Russians engage in serious negotiations?[15] This was far from certain in 1961.

12. Jerome B. Wiesner, "Comprehensive Arms-Limitation Systems," in Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security*, pp. 202–203.
13. See, for example, Thomas C. Schelling, "Arms Control: Proposal for a Special Surveillance Force," *World Politics*, Vol. 13 (October 1960); Henry A. Kissinger, "Arms Control, Inspection, and Surprise Attack," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (July 1960); Amrom H. Katz, "Hiders and Finders: An Approach to Inspection and Evasion," in Lefever, *Arms and Arms Control*, pp. 199–207; Lawrence S. Finkelstein, "The Uses of Reciprocal Inspection," in Melman, *Disarmament: Its Politics and Economics*, pp. 82–98; and Seymour Melman, ed., *Inspection for Disarmament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958).
14. For a summary and discussion of these ideas, see Bernard T. Feld, "Inspection Techniques of Arms Control," in Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security*, pp. 317–332. See also Wiesner's discussion of inspection techniques in "Comprehensive Arms Limitation Systems," pp. 209–211. Schelling and Halperin provide an interesting discussion of means of coping with the inevitable imperfection of inspection in their chapter on "Inspection and Information," in *Strategy and Arms Control*, pp. 91–106.
15. For a discussion of this question, see Bernhard H. Bechhoeffer, "Negotiating With the Russians," in Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security*, pp. 269–281; and Richard J. Barnet, "The Soviet Attitude on Disarmament," in Lefever, *Arms and Arms Control*, pp. 89–105.

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Many believed that the Soviet Union had no real interest in arms control—or that it would never permit the West's intrusive plans for on-site inspection to penetrate "the Iron Curtain." There was speculation about the conditions that might make arms control attractive to the Soviet Union: what economic, political, and strategic factors might cause it to embrace arms control?[16] Did arms control need to await a great thaw in East–West relations? Was it contingent on some form of East–West settlement? In part because the likelihood of serious Soviet participation in negotiations was unknown, there was some emphasis on unilateral steps that could further the cause of arms control by lending stability to the nuclear balance. But there was no getting around the fact that there could be no meaningful bilateral talks if the Soviet Union were uncooperative.

In sum, three questions troubled those who struggled with these issues during the formative period of 1958 to 1961 when arms control was beginning to emerge as a truly substantive component of national policy: 1) Could arms control be accepted as an instrument of security policy with a role to play in helping to address important security problems? 2) Would it be possible to monitor compliance with arms control treaties? and 3) Would the Soviet Union be willing to play a constructive role in arms control negotiations?

In subsequent years, each of these questions has been answered in the affirmative. It is widely accepted, even by those who have doubts about the particulars of a given treaty, that arms control is, in theory and often in practice, a legitimate and useful activity that can contribute to national security. The rapid improvement of satellite reconnaissance technologies has made verification a far more tractable problem than anyone could have expected twenty-five years ago; the development of national technical means (NTM) of verification has obviated the need for on-site inspection that was once assumed a prerequisite of negotiated agreements.[17] Finally, in the course of a number of negotiations, the Soviets have shown themselves to be tough but serious negotiators with whom it is possible to reach agreement. These points should not be overstated: some still doubt the value of arms control; verification is still a major stumbling block; and some still doubt Soviet

16. See, for example, Hedley Bull's chapter on "The Conditions of Arms Control," in *The Control of the Arms Race*, pp. 65–76.
17. For an account of the progress and implications of satellite reconnaissance, see Philip J. Klass, *Secret Sentries in Space* (New York: Random House, 1971). See also Lawrence Freedman's *US Intelligence and the Soviet Strategic Threat* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

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seriousness and trustworthiness. But, nevertheless, the main conditions identified by the early theorists as necessary for progress in arms control have been met.

Given this development, it might be expected that arms control had entered its heyday. Certainly the early arms control theorists were quite optimistic about its prospects.[18] But has there been great progress?

Gains and Disappointments for Arms Control

Although negotiated arms control has some significant accomplishments to its credit, the net record is sufficiently disappointing to indicate that simply meeting the conditions of the early theorists was not enough to usher in a new age of negotiated restraint. While the achievements of arms control should not be belittled, it seems fair to say that it has not lived up to the hopes invested in it; the plus side of the arms control ledger is accompanied by a substantial slate of minuses.[19]

On the plus side, there has been, first, a tremendous amount of arms control activity.[20] A fairly steady stream of treaties has been negotiated, beginning with the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and including the Hot Line Agreement (1963), the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963), the Outer Space Treaty (1967), the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), the Seabed Arms Control Treaty (1971), the Biological Weapons Convention (1972), the SALT I Agreements (1972), the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (1974), as well as the SALT II Treaty (signed in 1979 but never ratified)—and there are others. These treaties are the product of a huge investment in the preparation for and the participation in arms control negotiations. Formal discussion of a ban on nuclear testing

18. Hedley Bull notes, for example, that the early thinking on arms control was "deeply infected with optimism. . . . There was a sense of being at the threshold of a new era in arms control." See his "Arms Control: A Stocktaking and Prospectus," in *Problems of Modern Strategy (Part II)*, Adelphi Paper No. 55 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, March 1969), p. 13.
19. This does not differ much from Hedley Bull's judgment fifteen years ago: "The progress of arms control, while it has not been negligible, has been slight and the contributions it has made to the strengthening of international security are problematical." See "Arms Control: A Stocktaking and Prospectus," p. 13. For a somewhat more positive assessment, see Gert Krell, "The Problems and Achievements of Arms Control," *Arms Control*, December 1981.
20. For a complete history of modern arms control, see Robin Ranger, *Arms and Politics, 1958–1978: Arms Control in a Changing Political Context* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979). A briefer survey, with an emphasis on more recent activities, may be found in the chapter on "Arms Control in the 1980s," in Adam Yarmolinsky and Gregory Foster, *Paradoxes of Power: The Military Establishment in the Eighties* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), esp. pp. 131–137.

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began in 1958 and has continued, with occasional interruptions, into the 1980s. The question of non-proliferation occupied statesmen throughout much of the 1960s, and recurred on the arms control agenda of the 1970s in such guises as the Nuclear Suppliers Club discussions of the mid-1970s and the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle Evaluation of the late 1970s. The confrontation of conventional military forces in Central Europe has been the subject of more than a decade of continuous (albeit fruitless) negotiations. And setting aside an occasional hiatus, strategic nuclear arms negotiations have been underway more or less continuously since 1969.

Even during the Reagan Administration, at a time of great acrimony in U.S.–Soviet relations and with an American administration that is unenthusiastic about arms control, three separate negotiations were conducted—the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START); the negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) in Europe; and the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks (MBFR)—until the Soviets suspended them in the late fall of 1983. Moreover, arms control is well established as high-level policy, which attracts the attention of presidents, secretaries of state, national security advisers, and of the general public as well.

Second, and much more important than the mere fact of activity, several of the agreements impose restraints on central aspects of the arms competition. The Limited Test Ban Treaty prohibits atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty has established a regime which inhibits the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states. And in strategic arms control, the ABM Treaty succeeded in bringing the testing and deployment of defensive systems under stringent control, thereby restraining one large area of weapons technology and closing off, for the time being, the possibility of an interaction between offensive and defensive systems that has the potential to lead to huge increases in the cost and size of the strategic forces of the superpowers. With respect to offensive forces, SALT I did place a ceiling on numbers of delivery systems, and SALT II added to this constraints on numbers of warheads and some modest restrictions on modernization. These were constructive developments and represent considerable improvement over a completely unconstrained environment whose possible costs and dangers make it undesirable compared to the moderately limited environment of today.

Set against these achievements, however, are the disappointing aspects of arms control diplomacy. Surveying the record of the past twenty-five years, one cannot avoid three negative conclusions. First, the recent history of arms

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control is littered with as many failures as successes. In this, the two conferences of 1958 which initiated the era of serious arms negotiations (the Surprise Attack Conference and the Geneva Conference on the Discontinuance of Nuclear Weapons Tests) were unfortunately symptomatic: both ended unsuccessfully. But beyond those first false starts have been many other failed efforts. There is still no comprehensive test ban treaty. MBFR has to date produced no agreement, despite years of endless discussion. The conventional arms transfer talks were unsuccessful. Discussion of anti-satellite arms control proved abortive. Negotiations on naval limitations in the Indian Ocean led nowhere. The Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the SALT II agreement remain unratified. Even in cases where agreement was eventually reached, progress was often painfully slow.

Second, and more importantly, the impact of arms control has been modest, especially relative to the level of effort invested in it. As one exceptionally cynical commentator put it, "Arms control negotiations have served as a long-term source of employment for diplomats and of copy for journalists and academics but they have had little military impact."[21] Many of the agreements that have been reached have prohibited weapons from being put in places where there were none anyway—such as Antarctica, the sea-bed, or outer space—or have constrained weapons that nobody had much incentive to use—such as biological weapons. Such agreements are not without value, but they do not address the central problems and dangers that confront us.

In the cases where arms control agreements have confronted major aspects of the arms race, their effect has generally been limited. The Limited Test Ban Treaty has safeguarded the environment but has not proven especially constraining to the nuclear weapons programs of the superpowers (and several of the smaller nuclear powers are not signatories of the treaty). The Non-Proliferation Treaty has contributed to a regime of restraints that has probably slowed the spread of nuclear weapons, but the most worrisome cases remain outside the treaty or seek to elude its constraints.

And strategic arms control, the centerpiece of arms control in the past fifteen years and the primary interest of most defense and arms control

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21. Trevor Taylor, "Arms Control: The Bankruptcy of the Strategist's Approach," in David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf, eds., *The Arms Race in the 1980s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 59. For a sustained argument about the limited possibilities of traditional arms control, see Barton, *Politics of Peace*.

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analysts, has produced results that have disappointed supporters and critics alike. For in the 1970s, the decade of SALT, there occurred an enormous buildup of strategic nuclear forces *on both sides*. Both the United States and the Soviet Union added thousands of nuclear weapons to their arsenals during this period; between 1971 and 1980 the American stockpile of deployed nuclear warheads doubled while the Soviet Union's tripled.[22] In addition, modernization proceeded apace. The United States deployed the Minuteman III MIRVed ICBM during the first half of the decade, and spent the latter part of the decade upgrading it with a new warhead and guidance system. Poseidon and later Trident I submarine-launched missiles (SLBMs) were added to the strategic submarine force. The B-52 force was steadily modernized and provided with new armament—the short range attack missile (SRAM)—designed to improve its ability to penetrate Soviet air defenses. And throughout the decade, a whole new generation of strategic weapons—the MX, the Trident submarine, the B-1 bomber, and the air-launched cruise missile—was developed, most of which will likely be deployed during the next few years. On the Soviet side, the modernization effort was even more energetic, resulting in the tiresomely familiar litany of "the Soviet buildup": several new, modern, accurate, multiple-warhead ICBMs (including the SS-18 "heavy" missile), several new strategic submarines and SLBMs, deployment of the Backfire bomber and hints of the development of a new strategic bomber, and indications of more systems on the way.[23] In the face of all this, many liberals concluded in despair that strategic arms control simply legitimized the continuing arms race while many conservatives concluded with alarm that it served merely to camouflage an unrelenting Soviet buildup.

And what about the risk of war? Did SALT help to reduce it? Has it contributed to the stability of the strategic balance? As the Oppenheimer Panel on disarmament thirty years ago commented in one of the first serious efforts to analyze arms control, "the basic objective of any scheme of arms regulation should be to eliminate" the capacity for what the Panel then called

22. See *SIPRI Yearbook, 1980*, pp. xlii–xlvi. The substantial growth of American strategic capability during the last decade has been obscured by Western preoccupation with the Soviet buildup, but the fact is that the U.S. lead in deliverable warheads was larger, in absolute terms, at the end of the 1970s than at the beginning. This lead will probably disappear as the Soviet Union begins to place MIRVed warheads on its sea-based forces.
23. For a detailed analysis, see Robert P. Berman and John C. Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces: Requirements and Responses* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982). For a thoughtful discussion of the Soviet side of the arms competition, see David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983).

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a "surprise knockout blow."[24] But strategic arms control has not prevented the emergence of disturbing vulnerabilities, in particular the problem of ICBM vulnerability and the less widely appreciated vulnerability of command and control facilities—both borne of the great accuracy of contemporary ballistic missiles combined with the advent of multiple warheads. Of course, a significant fraction of both superpower strategic arsenals remain survivable and would be available for retaliation, so the fundamental deterrence relationship is not presently jeopardized by this development. But if there is some degree of safety against the possibility of a disarming first strike, it is because of a multiplication of weapons and delivery systems rather than the result of negotiated arms control. Measured by this standard, then, strategic arms control must be judged insignificant if not deficient.

The third negative conclusion that emerges—along with the failures of arms control and its modest impact—is that these twenty-five years of efforts to bring the arms competition under some form of limitation have had the effect of tarnishing the arms control process. The failures, the inadequacies, the sluggishness, the occasional irrelevance of arms control have understandably harmed its image. If the writings on and the successes of arms control in the early 1960s resulted in the legitimizing of arms control, the experiences of more recent years have gone far toward discrediting it. This is reflected in several arresting facts: it has been more than ten years since the last major arms control treaty was signed and ratified. It has been more than five years since the SALT I Interim Agreement on Offensive Weapons expired, since which time there has been no legally binding strategic arms control agreement in place. The last two arms control treaties placed before the Senate (the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and SALT II) have not been ratified. And the fate of SALT II is instructive: it failed to find enthusiasm in the Senate or with the public. Even the nuclear freeze movement, which has attracted such strong public support, is a reaction against the way in which arms control has been practiced in the past decade or two, and is an expression of frustration with the propensity of the "experts" simply to *manage* the arms race rather than truly *control* it.

While there remains a substantial reservoir of interest in and support for arms control, one can detect in writings on the subject a different, more tentative, often negative attitude. Arms control, we frequently hear, is dead

24. McGeorge Bundy, "Early Thoughts on Controlling the Nuclear Arms Race: A Report to the Secretary of State, January 1953," *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Fall 1982), p. 25.

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in the water, or, as University of California President David Saxon recently put it, "We seem to be on dead center just now . . . ."[25] The strategic arms control process has been pronounced "politically moribund."[26] There are complaints about a shortage of ideas: "In the analytical community," Richard Burt has commented, "thinking about arms control suffers from an unmistakeable malaise."[27] Too much should not be made of all this, but it should be evident that arms control has lost its bloom, that the hopefulness of earlier years has given way to more cynical and less ambitious expectations.

In short, arms control has not lived up to its promise. Those who took up the cause of arms control in the early 1960s felt that it offered the prospect of substantial benefits in the form of a more stable nuclear balance and a more restrained arms competition. But, as former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown has written, "Measured against these glittering possibilities, the achievements of arms negotiations to date have been modest indeed, as are their immediate prospects. . . . In all, not much to show for thirty-five years of negotiations and twenty years of treaties."[28] But why has this been the case? It is certainly possible for arms control to provide more benefit than it has. There are fairly straightforward arms control solutions to many of the strategic problems that most trouble us. The main obstacles—verification and negotiability—seem more manageable than anyone expected them to be. And yet great exertions have not yielded great results. What has gone wrong?

The Domestic Political Impediments to Arms Control

A major part of the answer lies in the ability of internal politics to shape and limit the results of arms negotiations. Each of the two main phases of arms control policymaking—the politics of policy formulation and the politics of ratification—is fraught with possibilities for preventing ambitious proposals or resisting agreements. These two phases in turn intersect in a complicated way with the larger domestic political process of which they are a part. In

25. "On the Pursuit of International Security," in Warren Heckrotte and George C. Smith, *Arms Control in Transition: Proceedings of the Livermore Arms Control Conference* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983), p. 173.
26. Gloria Duffy, "Is the SALT Era Over?" in Carlton and Schaerf, *Arms Race in the 1980s*, p. 117.
27. "Defense Policy and Arms Control: Defining the Problem," in Richard Burt, ed., *Arms Control and Defense Postures in the 1980s* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983), p. 1.
28. Harold Brown, *Thinking About National Security: Defense and Foreign Policy in a Dangerous World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983), p. 185.

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this way, electoral and Congressional politics, as well as public opinion, come to play a role in determining the possibilities of arms control.

The origin of U.S. arms control policy lies, obviously, in the policy formulation phase—in the negotiation primarily within the executive branch of the U.S. government. Here lurk several potential impediments to arms control. It is necessary to get all the many relevant parties within the government to agree on what should or should not be proposed and to get them to support whatever agreement is achieved. This may be the most difficult part of arms control. President Carter has observed, for example, that SALT II required as much negotiation in the United States as it did with the Soviet Union.[29] These internal negotiations can be fully as difficult as the international ones.[30]

The players in the internal game are many: the White House, which often has its own agenda of political, budgetary, and foreign policy concerns; the State Department, with its concern for the international political relationships involved; the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, a weak player in its own game; the various divisions and subdivisions of the Defense Department, which often have the most directly at stake; and occasionally key individuals from Congress, for example, Senator Jackson, who figured prominently in the early months of the Carter Administration.[31] The goal of the game is to produce an arms control proposal or position that is essentially acceptable to all. The structure of the game is simple: each of the organizations involved will seek, within the limits of its influence and effectiveness in the bureaucratic politics of the situation, to preserve its own interests or, at the least, to avoid having them badly violated.[32]

Here lies the crux of the problem. For while it is commonly said that arms control and military policy are compatible and indeed ought to be integrated, the fact is that the *practice* of arms control, whether as a process or in the particulars of a given agreement, can and usually does affront the interests of some of the players in the game. In particular, few offices in the Pentagon have their interests furthered by arms control, and the wariness of the military toward arms control is evident to participants in the process and is

29. Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), p. 218.
30. On this point, see, for example, Talbott, *Endgame*, p. 34.
31. On Jackson's role, see Talbott, *Endgame*, pp. 54, 102–103.
32. William Hyland offers some instructive points on this in "Institutional Impediments," in Burt, ed., *Arms Control and Defense Postures in the 1980s*, pp. 97–108.

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sometimes remarked upon by the military itself.[33] And because military support for agreements is thought to be, and probably is, crucial to the *ratification* process, as well as because military programs are directly affected, the military voice is a powerful one in the *policy formulation process*. Thus, President Kennedy conceded to the JCS in abandoning his quest for a comprehensive test ban. Or, to take a more recent example, Jimmy Carter reports in his memoirs that because it was going to be difficult to ratify SALT II, he was reliant on military support and consequently needed to keep the JCS and other important military constituencies satisfied with the U.S. negotiating position.[34] The strength of the military hand in shaping arms control policy and in safeguarding its interests against the intrusions of negotiated restraints explains why the JCS has, in general, consistently supported ratification of agreements that are reached, for having been satisfied in the policy formulation phase, it is free to take the high ground in the ratification process—as it did with SALT II. In short, although arms control and military policy share many of the same goals, they seek to achieve those goals through different, often incompatible means.

After all, arms control is an effort to interfere with the defense policy process, to constrain certain kinds of weapons, options, and practices for the larger good of national security. But this engages the interests of a large, powerful, complex, and not well understood process of defense decision-making and weapons acquisition, a process that generally seeks security not by constraining or eliminating weapons and military options but by providing them; this, it should not be forgotten, is the job that the Pentagon is hired to do, and it should come as no surprise that it seeks to fulfill that responsibility.[35] But, as William Hyland (himself a long-time participant in the

33. See, for example, Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 27.
34. Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 239.
35. For a suggestive analysis of the implications of this fact for arms control, see Graham Allison and Frederic Morris, "Armaments and Arms Control: Exploring the Determinants of Military Weapons," in Franklin Long and George Rathjens, eds., *Arms, Defense Policy, and Arms Control* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976), pp. 99–129. Also relevant is John Steinbruner and Barry Carter, "Organizational and Political Dimensions of the Strategic Posture: The Problems of Reform," pp. 131–154 in the same volume. Robert Art focuses on institutional reforms as a means of controlling military programs in "Restructuring the Military-Industrial Complex: Arms Control in Institutional Perspective," *Public Policy*, Fall 1974, pp. 423–459. Graham Allison provides a very interesting analysis of the powerful grip of internal factors in dominating the weapons procurement process in "Questions About the Arms Race: Who's Racing Whom? A Bureaucratic Perspective," in Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contrasting Approaching to Strategic Arms Control* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1974), pp. 31–72.

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process) has written, "Arms control lends itself well to infringements on defense policy," and further, it creates "an environment for bureaucratic guerilla warfare against military programs . . . ."[36] As the modest impact of arms control agreements to date attests, proponents of defense programs and weapons systems are far from helpless in this particular form of warfare. And given the size and complexity of the defense policy process and the potential for antagonism between military policy and arms control, it is very difficult to coordinate the two and to manage the bureaucratic and organizational politics effectively.[37]

Several important points flow from this analysis. First, arms control proposals are usually the result of internal bargaining. Consequently, deliberations are slow and changing proposals can be difficult. Considerable time and effort must be spent overcoming bureaucratic standoffs and adjudicating internal disputes.[38] Second, in these internal negotiations, some participants often have to be bought off—their positions accommodated or their sacrifices in one area made up in another.[39] Third, losers in the process need not give up. They can oppose or circumvent restrictions, take their case to the public, or air their disagreements before Congress—in short, broaden the fight to the ratification phase, having lost it internally. Such tactics will inevitably obstruct the smooth passage to a signed and ratified agreement. Fourth, internal critics will usually have to be paid for their public support of the treaty, as was the case, for example, with SALT I, where Secretary of Defense Laird and the Joint Chiefs of Staff made Administration support of a broad program of strategic modernization the fairly explicit condition of their support of the treaty.[40] Finally, policy formulation is the President's game if he

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36. Hyland, "Institutional Impediments," pp. 100–101.
37. For an account of one (relatively unsuccessful) effort to impose coordination, see Robert C. Gray, "The Coordination of Arms Control Policy and the Weapons Acquisition Process: The Case of Arms Control Impact Statements," *Arms Control*, September 1982, pp. 218–236.
38. In the summer of 1983, for example, President Reagan established a high-level arms control group under the chairmanship of the National Security Adviser whose main aim was reported to be "to overcome deadlocks between the State Department and the Pentagon and to move the arms control talks ahead." "Reagan Sets Up New Group to Work on Arms Problems," *The New York Times*, July 20, 1983. In the Carter Administration, the President himself would intervene to resolve interagency disputes. See Carter, *Keeping Faith*, p. 232; Talbott, *Endgame*, p. 3.
39. For discussion and examples of this phenomenon, see George Rathjens, Abram Chayes, and Jack Ruina, *Nuclear Arms Control Agreements: Process and Impact* (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1974), p. 15. This book offers an interesting short discussion on "The Impact of Intragovernmental Negotiations." See pp. 15–17.
40. See, for example, Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 30.

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and his advisers in the White House have the will and the skill to seize control of the process. This John Kennedy did in 1963; Nixon and Kissinger did likewise during SALT I—with some important decisions being made by the two of them in the Kremlin during the Moscow summit; and Carter attempted the same in formulating his bold March 1977 comprehensive proposal.[41] Unlike the ratification process, which can elude presidential control, policy formulation can be marked by decisive presidential interventions. Even if this happens, problems remain, for the Soviets still must agree and the Senate must still ratify. But the President does at least possess substantial power to shape the policy formulation process, and when that power has been exercised, progress has often ensued.

With respect to the politics of ratification, the second dimension of the domestic process of arms control, it is the Senate, rather than the President, that can be the decisive player in the game.[42] In the Senate is vested the authority to ratify treaties, and so the Senate can determine the fate of an agreement even if it is only a marginal influence on the formulation of arms control policy. And the key fact, as *The New Republic*'s Richard Strout has recently commented, is that, "In a Congress of 535 members, 33 Senators plus one can block a treaty." This may be, as Strout remarks, "a queer system."[43] But it is the system nevertheless, and it requires that the politics of ratification be tended to rather carefully so that a minority is not able to gather sufficient strength to defeat an agreement. This can involve a significant amount of cajolery and appeasement of key Senators, the involvement of Senators in policy formulation, permitting Senators to observe the negotiations first-hand, and political logrolling on military programs (or on other unrelated issues) to secure or assure the support of important votes, as well as an effort to mobilize public opinion. This may sound like the routine business of politics but it is not necessarily easy to do, as the Carter Admin-

41. On the exclusion of the bureaucracy from the creation of the comprehensive proposal, see Talbott, *Endgame*, p. 85.
42. For a careful and detailed analysis of the role of Congress in SALT, see Stephen Flanagan, "Congress and the Evolution of U.S. Strategic Arms Limitation Policy: A Study of the Legislature's Role in National Security Affairs" (Ph.D. dissertation, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1979). See also Stephen Flanagan, "The Domestic Politics of SALT II: Implications for the Foreign Policy Process," in John Spanier and Joseph Nogee, eds., *Congress, the Presidency, and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), pp. 44–76. For a briefer treatment of these issues, see Alan Platt, *The U.S. Senate and Strategic Arms Policy, 1969–1977* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1978).
43. "Views from Backstage," *The New Republic*, April 18, 1983, p. 39.

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istration demonstrated in its handling of SALT II.[44] This may be particularly true when there is skillful and determined public opposition to arms control, as there often seems to be, by what has been called "the vigilance lobby."[45] SALT I showed that ratification can be easy (although even in that case the Jackson Amendment—which mandated equality in any subsequent treaty—foreshadowed a more interventionist role for Congress); the Threshold Test Ban Treaty showed that ratification cannot be taken for granted; and SALT II showed that ratification can be a major hurdle, not easily overcome even with great effort.

Both the formulation of arms control policy and the ratification of treaties take place in the larger domestic arena, and are affected by the general political process normally at work. One substantial domestic political impediment is the electoral process, especially at the presidential level. The quadrennial electoral cycle has several possible disruptive consequences for the arms control process. For one thing, arms control policy tends to get caught up in partisan politics, with one party attacking the approach of the other, and often unsubstantiated charges and countercharges flung about in public debate. This clearly occurred in the 1980 election, and President Carter strove to paint Reagan as a warmonger while Reagan accused Carter of following policies of weakness, with distinct tendencies toward unilateral disarmament. This is already happening as we move into the early stages of the 1984 campaign: Republicans are charging that the softness of several of the Democratic aspirants will cause the Soviets to sit tight on arms control until after the election in the hope that they would have an easier time of it in negotiating with a new Democratic administration; Democrats are responding that the hard-line rhetoric and policies of the Reagan Administration have created such a hostile political climate that arms control agreements are virtually impossible to achieve. As Representative Richard Cheney (Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee) recently told the *Washington Post,* "It's

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44. For a critical assessment of the Carter Administration's management of SALT II in Congress, see Alan Platt, "The Politics of Arms Control and the Strategic Balance," in Barry M. Blechman, ed., *Rethinking the U.S. Strategic Posture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1982), pp. 161–172.
45. The phrase is from Talbott, *Endgame,* p. 104. A revealing glimpse at the skill, wealth, and organization of groups that tend to be skeptical of arms control may be found in Sidney Blumenthal, "The Ideology Makers," *The Boston Globe Magazine,* August 8, 1982. In the case of SALT II, the opponents were, on balance, more effective than the Administration in making their case. For a brief account of one of the key anti-SALT groups, The Committee on the Present Danger, see Curtis Wilkie, "Their Mission is to keep 'Strength on the Barricades,'" *The Boston Globe,* April 28, 1981.

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conceivable that this debate will become so partisan that you will get no agreement until after the election."[46]

A second way that electoral politics can disrupt the arms control process is that administrations that are taking heat on this issue and perceive themselves to be on the political defensive may backpedal from arms control. Thus President Ford, in the midst of his struggle with Ronald Reagan for the 1976 Republican nomination, banished the word "detente" from his political vocabulary and placed SALT II, then nearly completed, on hold. This was a decision that Ford came to regret,[47] but in the event it contributed to a several year delay in the signing of the SALT II agreement. Of course, this phenomenon can cut the other direction as well: when Richard Nixon sought in 1972 to bolster his image as peacemaker against the attacks of critics of the Vietnam War, the SALT I agreement became politically useful to him.[48] But the potential for disruption remains.

Third, elections often result, as they are intended to do, in changes of government. It seems to be a rule of thumb, if past experience is any guide, that roughly a year is lost in the transition from one administration to the next. Those new to power generally need time to overcome the instinct to substantially repudiate the policies of their predecessors, to study the issues anew from their own perspectives, to organize the policy machinery, and to formulate their own policies. Thus when the Nixon Administration inherited the incipient SALT process from the Johnson Administration in 1969, its first impulse was to slow the momentum toward negotiations so that it could review the situation.[49] The Carter Administration sought to avoid delay but nevertheless derailed the SALT II negotiations for a time with its impulsive March 1977 comprehensive proposal, which was a substantial departure from the negotiating record with which the Soviets were familiar and comfortable. And more recently, of course, the Reagan Administration held arms control in abeyance for nearly a year before embarking first on the INF and then the START negotiations. This recurrent pattern is not necessarily negative. Indeed, it is probably preferable that new administrations be cautious and careful as they begin to formulate arms control policy. But, when combined

46. David S. Broder and Paul Taylor, "Election May Inhibit Arms Pact, Republicans Say," *The Boston Globe*, March 30, 1983, p. 11. For a somewhat more hopeful interpretation, see Gerard C. Smith, "Time Is Running Out," *Newsweek*, January 31, 1983, p. 8.
47. See his memoirs, *A Time to Heal* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979).
48. Kissinger hints as much in *White House Years*, p. 1217.
49. Gerard Smith is explicit on this point in his *Doubletalk*, p. 21.

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with the risk that election years may also be disruptive, this means that as many as two years out of every four may be bad ones from the perspective of furthering arms control. This represents a substantial constraint on the process, one that helps to account for the slowness of many negotiations.

The accountability of members of Congress to the public is yet another way that the electoral process can influence the fate of arms control. Congressmen especially tend to be quite sensitive to public opinion, and so will reflect the favorable (as at present) or unfavorable political mood of the country about arms control. But the politician's finely honed instinct for self-preservation causes many to be ever-ready to duck a hot issue or to avoid taking a clear stand on a controversial one. This rule does not apply equally to all Congressmen and Senators at all times on all issues—obviously much depends on the specific circumstances in each case. But it is clear, for example, that when the strength of public opposition to SALT II became evident in 1979, even Senators sympathetic to the treaty were glad to avoid a vote. And the behavior of key figures—for example, Senator Frank Church—seems to be explained by concern over electoral considerations.[50]

In politics, of course, public opinion counts, although not in any easily traceable way. Because it has often been supportive of arms control, it may seem curious or even incorrect to label it an impediment. But, as we have seen in the recent, rapid reversal of public opinion from supporting to doubting the Reagan defense buildup, it is volatile.[51] And, moreover, it is at the same time manipulable—up to a point—and yet to a considerable extent uncontrollable. This means that it is vulnerable to the blandishments of sellers and opposers of strategic arms control (with success going to the side that most effectively mounts its public relations campaign) but that the efforts of both can be overwhelmed by events—usually to the benefit of one side or the other, depending on whether the event is the Soviet invasion of a neighboring country or slips of the tongue by high-level American officials about fighting limited nuclear war.

50. For a detailed account of Church's behavior during the Cuban brigade incident in the fall of 1979, see Gloria Duffy, "Crisis Mangling in Cuba," *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Summer 1983), pp. 67–87.
51. John Kenneth Galbraith provides recent testimony of this in his account of the futile effort to bring a freeze resolution to a vote at the Democratic National Convention in 1980. He notes that *then* freeze proponents "were thought slightly eccentric." "The Man Who Stayed the Course," *The New York Review of Books*, November 24, 1983, p. 47. Today, of course, all of the contenders for the Democratic nomination save one (Askew) have endorsed the freeze.

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In addition, public attitudes towards defense and arms control are schizophrenic.[52] Put most simply, the public fears both nuclear war and the Soviet Union, and the political climate of the moment is determined by which of these fears is predominant. The contradictions in public opinion are manifest in a number of ways. It supports arms control in the abstract but is often lukewarm or negative about specific agreements. It often favors both arms control and American military superiority, both negotiated restraint and military buildup. The public seems to believe in negotiating with the Russians but is mistrustful of Soviet power. Moreover, as the Committee on the Present Danger found in its polls (and demonstrated by its success), there is a sizeable anti-arms control constituency that can be mobilized to oppose arms agreements.[53] What all this suggests is that, while public opinion can occasionally be a supporting, or even, as at present, a driving force in the arms control process, it does not provide consistent backing for arms negotiations and agreements. For politicians, this means that support of an arms agreement can be a political liability as well as (and perhaps as often as) a strength.

Public opinion, moreover, is the medium through which international politics reverberates in the American body politic. Indeed, the linkage of arms control with international politics or, more specifically, with Soviet behavior, is the most frequently remarked upon political impediment to successful negotiation. At least twice, the strategic arms control process has been disrupted by provocative Soviet behavior, once in 1968 when it invaded Czechoslovakia and again in the fall of 1979 when first the Cuban brigade episode and then the invasion of Afghanistan proved to be the death of SALT II. Allegations about Soviet use of chemical weapons in Cambodia and Afghanistan, which though not proven have not been conclusively disproven, have caused doubts about Soviet willingness to comply with treaties. And more generally, the absence of restraint in Soviet activity in the Third World—in Indochina, the Horn of Africa, Angola, and Afghanistan—have eaten away at what little trust and good will existed toward the Soviet Union in the United States. It has also destroyed the tentative cooperation in the

52. For a description of public attitudes drawn from polling data, see Platt, "The Politics of Arms Control and the Strategic Balance," esp. pp. 156–161.
53. See, for example, the Committee's pamphlet, *Public Attitudes on SALT II*, March 1979, which reported the results of a poll in which 71 percent of the respondents who had an opinion about SALT II either opposed it or felt it required further protection of American interests before they could support it. In contrast, only 20 percent of those polled supported the treaty.

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political relationship between the two powers that was partially created by, but which also sustained, the strategic arms control process.

There are some who welcome this linkage, and indeed urge that it be American policy. The reasoning is that the conduct of arms control with the U.S.S.R. can be a reward for Soviet restraint (thereby providing an incentive for restraint if the Soviets are genuinely interested in arms control) and the abandonment of arms negotiations can be, if not punishment, then at least an appropriate gesture of disapproval of Soviet misbehavior. For others, however, the aim should be to isolate strategic arms control as much as possible from international relations so that it is not constantly buffeted by the vicissitudes of what will continue to be a stormy superpower relationship. As Philip Windsor has recently written, if the momentum of arms control is to be regained, "the first criterion is that the SALT process of the past few years be *dis*-linked, as clearly as possible, from the political developments of the global relationship which have increasingly held it hostage."[54]

The problem is, however, that, whether or not linkage is policy, it is an unavoidable political fact. This is so because of the way that global politics are refracted by the American polity. The Soviet Union is not likely to modify its interests and the general lines of its foreign policy simply to avoid violating American sensibilities. This means there will be crises and problems in the future just as there have been in the past. And international developments that grab headlines and attract coverage on the evening news will inevitably have an impact on public opinion and therefore on the political fortunes of those in the public arena. Consequently, they will as well help to define the realm of the possible in American politics with respect to foreign policy. So it is not simply the linkage of strategic arms control to Soviet international behavior that must be addressed, but also the linkage between international developments and American politics.

Conclusion: Running the Gauntlet of Political Impediments

In summary, then, the disappointing results of arms control seem to be a consequence of the effects of an imposing set of political impediments: policy formulation, the ratification process, electoral politics, congressional politics, bureaucratic politics, public opinion, even international politics have to be

54. Philip Windsor, "Restoring the Dynamics of Arms Control," *Millennium: The Journal of International Studies*, Spring 1982, p. 79.

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aligned properly or managed effectively if arms control is to be pursued successfully. And it is not enough to have only some pieces of the puzzle in place. In 1979, for example, the White House was eager for SALT II ratification, but public and congressional enthusiasm was lacking and Soviet foreign policy behavior was uncooperative. Today, there is passionate public support for arms control, but the White House is more interested in deployments than limitations. Hence, arms control progress requires that all the internal political factors be brought into positive alignment; any agreement will have to run the gauntlet of these potential impediments. Several implications follow from this fact.

First, because the whole of this political process is so slow, it raises another problem: a technological impediment. The pace of technological improvement is sufficiently rapid and the rate of modernization sufficiently fast that force postures change dramatically during the course of negotiations, raising new issues and problems before old ones are completely resolved.[55] During the course of SALT II (1972–1979), for example, both U.S. and Soviet forces changed markedly and some of the more difficult issues—cruise missiles, Backfire bombers, MIRVed heavy missiles—were not in view when the negotiations began.

Second, any agreement that successfully runs the gauntlet of impediments will necessarily be modest in impact—otherwise it would not have survived. Consequently, the failure of arms control to fully live up to its promise is perfectly understandable. But it has led to disillusionment with arms control at both ends of the spectrum: hawks because it has not solved U.S. strategic problems (for example, ICBM vulnerability), doves because it has not ended the arms race.

Third, the strong and direct commitment of the President and his close associates in the White House seems to be a decisive element in determining whether and how much arms control can succeed.[56] John Kennedy, for example, played an important role in pushing the Limited Test Ban Treaty to completion. Nixon and Kissinger played pivotal roles in the achievement of SALT I.[57] And Jimmy Carter's personal determination helped to make the

55. For an expression of concern that negotiations might not be able to keep pace with technological change, see Paul Doty, Albert Carnesale, and Michael Nacht, "The Race to Control Nuclear Arms," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (October 1976), pp. 119–132.
56. A point made fifteen years ago by McGeorge Bundy, "To Cap the Volcano," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (October 1969), pp. 18–20.
57. See, for example, Kissinger's account of Nixon's decision to plunge ahead with SALT despite

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SALT II agreement possible.[58] The President is the one player in the game who is powerful enough to override many of the political impediments to agreement. But, as the experience of the Carter Administration demonstrates, it is possible for the impediments to defeat even the President.

Fourth, it must be recognized that the effective pursuit of arms control is incompatible with a number of strategic worlds. For arms control to be a significant constraint on the arms competition and for it to contribute to strategic stability, it must preclude many counterforce systems and render impossible many if not all nuclear war-fighting options; in short, it must close off the paths toward a more heavily armed and heavily counterforce world.[59] But that world appears to be preferable to the Soviet military and desirable to a significant portion of the American strategic community, military and civilian. Others disagree with this direction and attempt to use arms control to stop it. But because we cannot agree among ourselves on the strategic environment toward which we should be moving, it is virtually impossible for arms control to play a constructive role in shaping that environment. Those whose strategic visions are foreclosed by arms control (whether war-fighters or disarmers) will always find its part to be unsatisfactory. And, of course, those who render such verdicts will have a rich arsenal of political weapons to employ in impeding arms control.

Finally, it is worth noting that some of these domestic impediments can be avoided by pursuing the aims of arms control in a different fashion. An arms control strategy that placed less emphasis on formal treaties and negotiations and more on routinized, less public consultations, such as those of the SALT Standing Consultative Commission would bring these domestic factors much less into play.[60] Moreover, as the early arms control theorists emphatically pointed out, there are many unilateral steps that can be taken in defense policy that further the objectives of arms control, and much more effort could be invested in these. It is often said that the goals of arms control are no different from those of sound military policy. But the latter is not easy to achieve either, and is necessary whether or not there is great success in arms control.

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opposition from conservative supporters back home and despite only shaky support from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. *White House Years*, pp. 1232–1233.

58. See Strobe Talbott's account in his *Endgame*, pp. 1–7. In typical Carter fashion, he devoted himself compulsively to the mastery of the relevant technological details prior to the Vienna Summit.

59. On this point, see Smith, *Doubletalk*, p. 25.

60. These approaches are explored in Sharp, "Restructuring the SALT Dialogue."

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