

Needed: a Comprehensive Framework for Eliminating WMD

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THE WEAPONS OF
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“Needed: a Comprehensive Framework for Eliminating WMD”

Michael Krepon

What strategic concept should guide our efforts to devalue, reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction in the decades ahead? A goal this daunting won't happen by chance or by standard operating procedures. Progress will be achieved only through concerted efforts by political leaders and by sustained domestic and international support. Our strategic concept must guide and reinforce these efforts. It must offer real promise of national, regional and international security that rests on pillars other than the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons. Our strategic concept must be compelling and yet practical. Otherwise, our efforts will appear haphazard and will lack staying power.

During the Cold War, the most compelling threat was defined as a powerful ideological foe well armed with nuclear weapons. The strategic concepts of containment and deterrence were formulated to checkmate that foe. Now that the Cold War is over, the paramount threat has changed. To paraphrase President George W. Bush, our worst nightmare is now the most dangerous weapons in the most dangerous hands. Deterrence and containment will not checkmate extremists who wish to obtain weapons of mass destruction. We need a new strategic concept to provide safety against these dangers.

The Bush administration has chosen unfettered U.S. dominance as its strategic concept to promote safety in a very dangerous world. This concept, as well as its implementation, has placed enormous burdens on the U.S. armed forces, alienated most of America's allies, and has sparked deep anger in the Islamic world. The central paradox of the Bush administration is that its national security policy, which is based on strength and American primacy, has made America more vulnerable.

U.S. dominance in the international system is a fact of life. It is not an unwanted gift to be returned. U.S. military strength is not the problem – it's part of the solution. The problem lies in the limitations of U.S. power projection capabilities in tackling the dangers we now face, how military power has been misused, and how other instruments of U.S. leadership have been denigrated. If U.S. military power is used wisely, in conjunction with the other tools of American leadership, it can save lives, forge new partnerships, maintain old friendships, and help safeguard national, regional, and international security.

Critiques of the Bush administration's performance are not hard to find. What we lack is an alternative strategic concept to the unfettered pursuit of U.S. dominance, a new concept that is far more likely to increase security, mend alliances, forge new partnerships, and progressively devalue, reduce and eliminate the most deadly, indiscriminate weapons. It has been thirteen years since the Soviet Union dissolved and three years since the transformational events of 9/11. It is about time for us to conceptualize, popularize, and implement a new strategic concept to promote safety in these troubled times.

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Complacency-shocking events that lend themselves to transformational outcomes are very rare. The unveiling of the atomic bomb to end World War II was such an event. At the dawn of the nuclear age, many distinguished individuals responded by championing the concept of abolition, and drew up detailed plans to achieve this outcome. Their effort to conceptualize abolition foundered in a world divided by an iron curtain and competing ideologies. Along with the constructs of deterrence and containment, the Cold War generated a new practice of strategic arms control. These constructs were built upon the paradoxical notion that safety rested on the mutual threat of destruction as well as on national vulnerability.

This support structure that buttressed superpower nuclear arsenals is now a remnant of another era. Constructs of mutual destruction and national vulnerability are widely and properly viewed as unacceptable. Strategic arms control is no longer part of the lexicon. What shall fill this void?

Our new construct must facilitate the other necessary conditions for the meaningful reduction and elimination of the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons. If nations that have relied on nuclear weapons do not feel secure without them, they won't get rid of them. Our construct must therefore support conventional military capabilities and healthy alliances that protect national interests. Nations that possess weapons of mass destruction because of a regional dispute or a rivalry need to resolve the dispute and defuse the rivalry. Therefore, our chosen construct must also facilitate peacemaking. Only when external conditions are non-threatening can states begin to relax their grip on the most threatening weapons.

Weak, but responsible states that seek or acquire the deadliest weapons must be convinced to give them up. Sometimes they can be convinced to do so under the protection of a much stronger state, or through economic incentives or

sanctions. Sometimes major regional or international shifts afford opportunities for states to give up nuclear options, as was the case in for Argentina, Brazil, and in states that gained independence after the demise of the Soviet Union. Sometimes nuclear disarmament requires regime change, as was the case in South Africa. Nor can we rule out the option of military action to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons in exceptional circumstances.

For progress to be sustainable in all cases, our strategic concept must strengthen non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. To be effective, these regimes must be widely perceived as equitable and reliable. If states with the largest arsenals of the most deadly weapons seek to play by different rules than everyone else, the regimes will be widely perceived as inequitable and will be difficult to strengthen. If discrimination is the norm, that norm will have few willing adherents. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty acknowledged discrimination, but only on a provisional basis. Our new strategic concept must be nondiscriminatory.

The requirements we have laid out for our new strategic concept are quite daunting. But this is where we must start. If our actions are unguided by an overarching strategic concept, they are far more likely to be haphazard, unfocused, and short-lived. If one wants to reach a final destination, it's a good idea to have a sense of how to get there. Our strategic concept cannot be rigid and inflexible, as this will invite frustration. Our route plan needs to allow for adaptation to meet unforeseen conditions and setbacks. Our choice of a strategic concept is central, not peripheral, to success. Without it, we are more likely to lose our way.

If we choose our construct wisely, we can provide reinforcement for the other conditions necessary for success in progressively reducing and eliminating deadly, indiscriminate weapons. Since cooperation among major powers is essential to this goal, our construct ought to facilitate the effective functioning of the United Nations Security Council. Since discrimination between the strong and the weak corrodes international cooperation, our construct needs to strengthen universal norms. Our construct must demonstrate clear and compelling utility against the paramount security threats of our time. Unless we can demonstrate success, we won't be able to secure the domestic and international consent we need for the long haul.

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The Bush administration has defined the central security threat of our time as terrorism, especially terrorism that seeks to produce mass casualties and

acquire deadly, indiscriminate weapons. The administration's construct for combating this threat rests on dominant U.S. military capabilities to dissuade, deter, defend, and defeat adversaries. Preemptive strikes and preventive war are included in the panoply of military options needed to defeat the combined threats posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

As President George W. Bush wrote in his covering letter to the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, "To defeat this threat we must make use of every tool in our arsenal – military power, better homeland defense, law enforcement, intelligence, and vigorous efforts to cut off terrorist financing."¹ A companion strategy document, *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, adds arms control, diplomacy, and multilateral agreements to this toolkit, but "counterproliferation" – the use of coercion and military instruments -- continues to be given pride of place. This is entirely in keeping with the Bush administration's oft-repeated lack of confidence in diplomacy or multilateral treaties to prevent bad actors from acquiring deadly weapons. Thus, when President Bush's pledged that, "We will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes and terrorists to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons,"² he was referring indirectly, but unmistakably, to the use of force by means of preemptive strikes and preventive war.

The Bush administration's definition of the paramount threat and the execution of its national security strategy have not generated consensus building at home and abroad. Instead, they have placed U.S. armed forces in harms way without adequate back up, weakened alliance ties, and generated great anger in the Islamic world directed against the United States. These conditions do not provide a basis for success in reducing and eliminating the defined threats of terrorists who seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

Part of the Bush administration's troubles lie in its definition of the paramount threat. The administration defines the challenge facing us as a "global war against terror." This expansive formulation is far too generalized, to the detriment of applying focused remedies and balanced priorities. As the "9/11 Commission" report concluded,

[T]he enemy is not just "terrorism," some generic evil. This vagueness blurs the strategy. The catastrophic threat at this moment of history is

¹ September 2002, p. 3, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

² December 2002, p. 1, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/WMDStrategy.pdf>

more specific. It is the threat posed by *Islamic* terrorism, especially the al Qaeda network, its affiliates, and its ideology.³

While the administration has defined the terror threat expansively, it has compounded its difficulties by defining the proliferation threat far too narrowly. In this view, only nuclear weapons in the wrong hands constitute a danger. Thus, it is not OK for bad actors to seek nuclear weapons, but it is OK for the United States to fund research and development for an improved nuclear weapon design to destroy hardened, underground bunkers where bad actors and bad weapons may reside. The administration is adamantly opposed to states such as North Korea and Iran testing nuclear weapons, but quite vigilant in its intent to leave this option open for the United States, should the need arise. By parsing the threat of weapons of mass destruction in this way, the Bush administration undercuts the requirements for norm setting and non-discrimination that are central in a successful international strategy against terrorism and proliferation.

The execution of the Bush administration's national security strategy has also left much to be desired. While preemptive strikes and preventive war have always been options available to U.S. presidents, American strategic culture as well as the constraints imposed by domestic politics have relegated these options to the furthest reaches of the national security toolkit. It's worth recalling that President Harry Truman rejected advice to carry out preemptive strikes against the Soviet Union before it could join the United States as a nuclear power. Even though the very existence of the United States was threatened by the possession of nuclear weapons in Joseph Stalin's hands, Truman vetoed preemption on the grounds that it was un-American as well as unlikely to succeed. The United States was a victim of preemptive strikes and a preventive war launched by Japan; Truman was not about to adopt Japanese tactics, even against an existential threat.

The Bush administration's reliance on counterproliferation is hardly surprising. In the catechism of post-Cold War American conservatism, diplomacy and arms control are not terribly useful. Bilateral agreements constrain U.S. superiority, while multilateral accords governing nonproliferation and disarmament are abided by good international citizens, but not by bad actors. Consequently, maximum military flexibility is needed to deal with hard cases. A deep pessimism suffuses these operating assumptions. If diplomacy is

³ Emphasis in the original. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, *The 9/11 Commission Report*, Chapter 12, p.2. See http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Ch12.pdf

likely to fail against outliers, and if the international community will probably balk when called upon to fight tyrants, U.S. armed forces will face continuous, exhausting challenges.

During the Clinton administration, U.S. power projection capabilities grew extraordinarily, but domestic divides and a cautionary, fretful approach to the use of force served as constraining factors. President George W. Bush and his principal advisers considered themselves a far more decisive lot but they, too, had limited room to maneuver in a deeply divided Washington rent by the disputed 2000 national election.

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The shock and trauma of the events of 9/11 was transformational. These events clarified the threat and forged a domestic consensus to take military action against it. These events also prompted a profound shift in emphasis in U.S. national security strategy. Preemption and preventive war now figured far more prominently in official U.S. statements. The ambitions of U.S. national security strategy grew along with the public's anxieties. Separate strands within American conservatism became intertwined in the formulation of that strategy. A hard-nosed appreciation of military power was now infused with neo-conservative idealism. Consider these passages from President George Bush's covering message to the *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*:

History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.

We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.

[T]he United States will use this moment of opportunity to extend the benefits of freedom across the globe.⁴

The net effect of this rare conjunction of national vulnerability, power projection capabilities and unbounded conviction was the loosening of important moorings. Not since the administration of Woodrow Wilson has an American president set out to change the world in this fashion. Wilson had paltry means to

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

accomplish ambitious ends, compared to the unprecedented military power available to the Bush administration.

Retribution was first directed at the al Qaeda leadership and their recruits, operating from a safe haven in Afghanistan, courtesy of the Taliban. This was essential, urgent business, well supported by the international community. Success in disrupting al Qaeda and driving the Taliban from power came quickly, with minimal coalition troops on the ground. This accomplishment was a source of great satisfaction, but as we now know, with the benefit of hindsight, celebrations were premature. The troop strength assigned to Afghanistan was clearly insufficient to block the retreat of the Taliban and al Qaeda leadership, to prevent the reconstitution of their cadres, or to extend stabilization beyond Kabul.

Then the Bush administration moved on to Iraq. To make the case that this was a war of necessity rather than of choice, administration officials wrapped the paramount threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction around Saddam Hussein. Alarming intelligence assessments, reflecting too little current information and too much reliance on suspect sources, were embellished by the senior-most administration officials.

If President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and others truly believed their own hyperbolic assessments, they would have been impervious to cautionary intelligence judgments, had such qualms been more forcefully offered. Alternatively, the administration's war hawks may well have understood that their threat assessments were overdrawn, but they were confident that the ends of removing Saddam justified their chosen means. The widely expected discovery of chemical and biological weapons in Iraq would presumably prove sufficient to justify a preventive war. In Iraq, the threats and remedies discussed in the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* would all come together.

Instead, the administration's national security strategy fell apart. Again, military execution was exemplary, but troop strength was far too low for the consolidation of gains. The arrogance of fighting this war without adequate diplomatic and military back up was predicated on the hubris of post-war expectations. Nation building is not something that the Pentagon is particularly fond of, or has much experience in doing. But Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, a master of bureaucratic maneuver, insisted upon and won this assignment. The progression of errors that followed has imposed terrible trials on U.S. liberators, who became perceived as occupiers when they sought to impose order. The more they sought to impose order, the greater the violence

they encountered, and the more Iraq became a haven and proving ground for terrorists. Within two years, this vicious circle belatedly established the Bush administration's firm link between terrorism and Iraq.

Iraq's missing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have shifted public calculations of ends and means. The justification of the Bush administration's Iraq project now rests on democracy building. Much blood and treasure has been spent on this pursuit. The outcome remains very much in doubt. The Iraqi people have been relieved of the burdens of Saddam, his sons, and the Ba'athist apparatus, but new burdens have been imposed upon them. We do not know how this story will unfold. As the 9/11 Commission concluded, if "Iraq becomes a failed state, it will go to the top of the list of places that are breeding grounds for attacks against Americans at home."⁵ Islamic extremism will become far more virulent and the entire region will be adversely affected. Alternatively, if Iraq stabilizes into a well functioning representative government, history will be kinder to the Bush administration.

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While these matters remain in limbo, we can compile a balance sheet of the Bush administration's performance in dealing with weapons of mass destruction. The following returns are already in: The administration has rejected efforts to negotiate improved monitoring arrangements integral to multilateral treaties governing non-proliferation and disarmament. It has opposed the extension of deeply intrusive monitoring arrangements for bilateral arms reduction with Russia. It has insisted that the barest limits on U.S. strategic forces remain in effect for the briefest possible moment, eight years from now, after which they would lapse. It has opposed the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It has reversed six decades of presidential leadership and rejected verification arrangements for the stoppage of fissile material production for weapons. It has opposed any constraints on the flight-testing and deployment of space weapons. It has reduced funding for cooperative threat reduction programs in Russia and proceeded at a pace convenient to bureaucrats and lawyers. It has been slow to extend these efforts outside the former Soviet Union.

On top of this, the Bush administration has fought a preventive war against Iraq to seize its weapons of mass destruction that appear to be nonexistent. Meanwhile, the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs have proceeded apace, unimpeded by U.S. diplomacy or military options, which have

⁵ <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report>

shrunk greatly with the passage of time and as a consequence of the administration's use of force in Iraq.

This side of the Bush administration's balance sheet is appalling. Since the dawn of nuclear diplomacy, no U.S. President has compiled a more negative record, or done more to obstruct multilateral efforts to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction than George W. Bush.

On the other side of the ledger, the Bush administration has successfully launched the Proliferation Security Initiative. Libya has renounced attempts to acquire weapons of mass destruction. As a consequence, it was no longer possible for the Government of Pakistan to deny the existence of a nuclear supply network centered around A. Q. Khan. Khan has been sidelined, and at least parts of the network have been rolled up. How much of the network remain uncovered, how easily it could be replicated, and how many others in Pakistan were involved or aware of the network remain open questions. Thanks to U.S.-led military action in Afghanistan, al Qaeda cells, which continue to seek the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons, must now do so under more difficult circumstances. While willing recruits in the Islamic world have grown, their safe havens have shrunk. And Saddam and Sons will not be around to seek nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons – although a subsequent Iraqi government might well choose to do so in response to Iranian programs.

Credit must be given to the Bush administration for these successes, even though we cannot judge their long-term effects. After all, partial successes in this business are the rule; significant progress usually comes from concerted efforts over the long haul. Success over the long haul, however, requires that treaty regimes must be strengthened from within, and not just by appurtenances devised to compensate for their weaknesses. Here the Bush administration's efforts have been seriously imbalanced.

Nor has the administration been able to argue persuasively that it's successes have made America and the world safer from the three most consequential nuclear-related threats of our time: poorly safeguarded weapons and materials, and North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs. These paramount nuclear threats do not lend themselves very well to the instruments in which the administration places the greatest faith.

The administration deserves harsh grades for not according these paramount threats a higher priority. Cooperative threat reduction programs designed to prevent the most dangerous weapons and materials from falling into the wrong hands now receive less than two dimes for every dollar spent on

missile defenses. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein was deemed to be a far more urgent matter than stopping the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs. Since January 2003, when Pyongyang announced its withdrawal from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, there have only been three short rounds of multilateral talks designed to stop and reverse the North Korean nuclear program. The Bush administration did not formulate and present concrete suggestions in this regard until June 2004, eighteen months after Pyongyang announced its intentions to resume reprocessing of Plutonium. U.S. negotiations with Tehran have yet to begin.

Perhaps a second Bush administration, like a second Reagan administration, would be able to make significant gains in reducing these paramount nuclear dangers. We don't know, of course, if the President will be re-elected, and if so, whether senior officials in a second administration will embrace quite different priorities. We can, however, surmise, that a second Bush administration will face tough challenges regaining diplomatic ground lost as a result of its muscular preferences. Military dominance has provided only limited returns and heavy losses on the non-proliferation and disarmament accounts. The administration had one preventive war card in its deck, which it played in Iraq. Having been assigned the task of liberating and now occupying Iraq, America's armed forces are poorly positioned to take on more such assignments. Preemptive strikes remain an option, but in the absence of concerted diplomatic efforts to seek rollback through peaceful means, in which the administration has shown little interest thus far, this choice would further isolate Washington.

The unbalanced approach adopted by the Bush administration has not fostered the conditions necessary for the progressive reduction and elimination of the most deadly, indiscriminate weapons. The pursuit of greater U.S. military supremacy only builds confidence in those pursuing it, but not where that dominance might someday be applied. As a consequence China and Russia are hedging their bets, and without their active support, the toughest proliferation cases will get tougher. If Beijing and Moscow perceive that the pursuit of even greater U.S. dominance is designed to negate their deterrents, they will take compensating measures. They will also confine their cooperation with U.S. efforts to stem, reverse, and eliminate deadly weapons to very narrow definitions of national interest.

Weak states that worry about U.S. power projection capabilities, like Libya, might cash in their chips. But Libya is not exactly a role model for the international community. More likely, states that seek the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons for reasons that may or may not have to do with the United States will continue to do so. Options will remain open, while

surreptitious advances will continue. And in the absence of concerted efforts to strengthen treaties from within, external “fixes” will be compensatory, and not systemic. The net effect of denigrating treaties while seeking to compensate for their weaknesses through coercive and extra-judicial measures is likely to be weaker norms and weaker compliance.

Just as a “combined arms” approach increases the likelihood of success on the battlefield, a “combined efforts” approach is needed to strengthen treaty regimes designed to rid the world of the most deadly, indiscriminate weapons. The strategic concept of military dominance can produce successes, but it constitutes a severely skewed approach to a multifaceted problem. The use of force is not widely applicable to proliferation threats, and the pursuit of unfettered dominance corrodes rather than builds international cooperation. The application of power projection generates more terrorist threats than it foils. It also risks heavy casualties, and places great burdens on the societies liberated from tyrants. The more the strategic concept of dominance is actually demonstrated, the more it exhausts or alienates the countries waging, receiving, and observing its effects.

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Let us briefly turn to a very different strategic construct for a nonproliferation and disarmament strategy that has recently been advanced by a group of experts at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. The construct they embrace, “universal compliance,” has great value.⁶ It reminds us of the centrality of the rule of law in international efforts to progressively reduce and eliminate the most deadly, indiscriminate weapons. In so doing, it provides a needed counter-balance to the impulses of American “exceptionalism” with regard to treaties. This construct speaks clearly on the importance of norms and standards that must apply to every nation. It helps to heal the discriminatory divide in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and it helps to round up international support against outliers.

Might not “universal compliance” serve as an alternative strategic construct to the Bush administration’s championship of dominance? The authors of the draft Carnegie study, which is subtitled “A Strategy for Nuclear Security,” view it as “a blueprint for U.S. leadership in rethinking the international nonproliferation regime.” The authors argue persuasively that the nonproliferation regime suffers from serious challenges, and that new thinking is

⁶ George Perkovich, et. al., *Universal Compliance, A Strategy for Nuclear Security* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) June, 2004. (draft).

needed. They believe that some elements of the Bush administration's approach are useful, and some are counterproductive. They call for a more holistic approach. The draft Carnegie study argues for "systemic change: a new strategy to defeat old and new threats before they become catastrophes."⁷

The proposed Carnegie strategy is much broader than that proposed by the Bush administration. It calls for concerted actions to prevent the emergence of new nuclear weapon states; to secure all nuclear materials; to stop illegal transfers; to devalue nuclear weapons; and to commit to conflict resolution. This strategy merits our support. (If, however, we agree to define the paramount threats facing the international community today as proliferation *and* Islamic extremism – or the most dangerous weapons and materials in the most dangerous hands – then we would need to add key elements to the Carnegie Endowment's list.) Whether we expand our definition of the threat to include Islamic extremism, or define it more narrowly to proliferation, does "universal compliance" work as a strategic concept? Does it meet the tests laid out at the top of this essay?

Remember, our strategic concept needs to be compelling; otherwise, it will fail to generate sustained public support, domestically and internationally. A strategic concept will gain enduring support if it demonstrates success in tackling the most serious national, regional, and international security threats that we face. Our strategic concept must therefore be generic, practical, and descriptive. Because the paramount threats of proliferation and Islamic extremism are so multifaceted, our strategic concept must be adaptable.

When measured against these standards, "universal compliance" is an essential condition for successful implementation of treaty regimes, but it leaves much to be desired as a strategic concept. Universal compliance is not descriptive of the paramount threats we face or of the broader objectives to which universal compliance is sought. Nor does this admirable construct apply to some of the key elements of the non-proliferation strategy endorsed by the Carnegie team, let alone a more expansive definition of the threat to include Islamic extremism. "Universal compliance" also sidesteps the strategic concept's desired end state, perhaps because the words "nuclear disarmament" are not very palatable in the United States.

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⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

What, then, might a more comprehensive, compelling and properly descriptive strategic concept be for these troubled times? Elsewhere, I have advocated at book length a strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction.⁸ In my view, we have adopted a far too limited definition of these words, equating them with creative government initiatives designed to safeguard the most dangerous weapons and materials residing in the former Soviet Union. I believe that it is time to elevate and expand the varied government initiatives championed by Sam Nunn, Richard Lugar, and others to a central organizing principle for dealing with the combined dangers associated with extremism and weapons of mass destruction. If we think of Cooperative Threat Reduction as a strategic concept rather than as an acronym, we can gain traction in taking the most dangerous weapons and materials out of the most dangerous hands.

A strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction has far greater potential to progressively devalue, reduce and eliminate the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons than the further pursuit of U.S. military dominance. Unfettered dominance requires arms control and disarmament norms that apply to others, but not to the United States. This duality is not sustainable, because discriminatory norms corrode nonproliferation and disarmament regimes. If we aspire for norms to be respected, we must also aspire that they be universal, not selective. Duality exists in the world today – this is part of the reason why international relations are so unhinged. Elevating and expanding Cooperative Threat Reduction into a strategic concept would reflect and connect the duality of contemporary conditions, where strength does not necessarily provide protection, and where weakness breeds the most dangerous threats.

The number of cases where U.S. military dominance can be applied to eliminate weapons of mass destruction is paltry compared to Cooperative Threat Reduction initiatives. Given the burdens that now fall on U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, new expeditions that require significant troop strength are unlikely. States that seek to acquire the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons know this. Consequently, the “demonstration effect” of counterproliferation operations is quite limited. The combination of discriminatory norms and limited prospects of U.S. enforcement insures very narrow successes. Worse, these skewed efforts increase the value of the deadliest, indiscriminate weapons in the hands of outlier states and extremists. In contrast, Cooperative Threat Reduction has a successful track record in devaluing, reducing and eliminating the most dangerous weapons and materials. The practical application of the strategic

⁸ Michael Krepon, *Cooperative Threat Reduction, Missile Defense and the Nuclear Future* (New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction can extend as far as political adroitness and financial backing will allow.

The unfettered pursuit of U.S. military dominance undermines nonproliferation and disarmament treaty regimes by asserting special rights to test weapons or to avoid intrusive inspections. The strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction is directly supportive of nonproliferation and disarmament treaty regimes. Indeed, Cooperative Threat Reduction initiatives are easiest to implement when backed up by treaty-based obligations for transparency, arms reduction, and disarmament. A cavalier approach to treaties make Cooperative Threat Reduction more essential, but also more difficult to implement.

The strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction, unlike military dominance, has global application. Cooperative Threat Reduction initiatives can and should be employed in every troubled region, wherever dangerous weapons and materials are being held by states that are willing to forego or safeguard them. The pursuit of Cooperative Threat Reduction must not, however, foreclose the use of force when dangerous actors choose not to cooperate. If concerted efforts under the banner of Cooperative Threat Reduction fail in the hardest cases, the resort to military options has greater legitimacy and is likely to gain stronger international support.⁹

The strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction is properly descriptive of, and directly applicable to, the compelling security threats that we now face. It lends itself to collaborative action by major powers. It has the potential to repair strained diplomatic ties and holds the promise of strengthening measures both integral and additional to nonproliferation and disarmament treaty regimes. A strategic concept of Cooperative Threat Reduction would help us to expand the scope of traditional arms control to reflect the more challenging nature of the security threats we now face. Another benefit of embracing Cooperative Threat Reduction as a strategic concept is the degree of domestic, bipartisan support “CTR” programs enjoy in the United States.

Cooperative Threat Reduction is a far more ambitious strategic concept than traditional arms control because it applies to all troubled regions, all deadly weapons with indiscriminate effects, and all countries, without exception.

⁹ Because the use of force is not excluded, General Bill Burns prefers to characterize the proposed strategic concept as “Comprehensive Threat Reduction.” Another reason for considering this broader formulation would be to avoid confusion with the “Nunn-Lugar” CTR initiatives.

Success in pursuing Cooperative Threat Reduction will determine the extent to which the most deadly, indiscriminate weapons are progressively devalued, reduced, and eliminated. The choice of Cooperative Threat Reduction as a strategic concept can clarify the journey, as well as help us to arrive at our destination.

List of published studies and papers

All papers and studies are available as pdf-files at the Commission's website: www.wmdcommission.org

No 1 "Review of Recent Literature on WMD Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation" by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

No 2 "Improvised Nuclear Devices and Nuclear Terrorism" by Charles D. Ferguson and William C. Potter

No 3 "The Nuclear Landscape in 2004: Past Present and Future" by John Simpson

No 4 "Reviving the Non-Proliferation Regime" by Jonathan Dean

No 5 "Article IV of the NPT: Background, Problems, Some Prospects" by Lawrence Scheinman

No 6 "Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones: Still a Useful Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Tool?" by Scott Parrish and Jean du Preez

No 7 "Making the Non-Proliferation Regime Universal" by Sverre Lodgaard

No 8 "Practical Measures to Reduce the Risks Presented By Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons" by William C. Potter and Nikolai Sokov

No 9 "The Future of a Treaty Banning Fissile Material for Weapons Purposes: Is It Still Relevant?" by Jean du Preez

No 10 "A Global Assessment of Nuclear Proliferation Threats" by Joseph Cirincione

No 11 "Assessing Proposals on the International Nuclear Fuel Cycle" by Jon B. Wolfsthal

No 12 "The New Proliferation Game" by William C Potter

No 13 "Needed: a Comprehensive Framework for Eliminating WMD" by Michael Krepon

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