

# Foreword

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Beginning in the late 1950s the study and discussion of arms control were transformed from the rhetorical to the professional and the influential. All the chapters in this volume are professional; all will almost certainly be influential.

Some of us still remember the ideological disputes over the terms *arms control* and *disarmament*. Donald G. Brennan in his 1961 editor's preface to *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security* had to warn against the "false dichotomy" of "disarmament *versus* arms control." He said, "The point of view of this book . . . is that 'arms control' is a generic term that includes the possibility of literal 'disarmament' among other possible cases." He went on to say that a few writers held that "arms control" was a "distinctly wicked doctrine" and that those who advocated it in contrast to disarmament were made to appear as immoral proponents of the continuation of the arms race.<sup>1</sup>

Brennan was clearly smarting. He evidently felt that the "disarmers" occupied the moral high ground, and he needed to defend his own authors. I remember a number of occasions when accusations were vituperative, but the antagonism had already peaked by the time the book appeared. It was clearly "arms control" that successfully indoctrinated the John F. Kennedy administration, and Brennan's somewhat intemperate attack was probably unnecessary by the time the book was in print.

The dispute over terminology, like the dispute over substance, was not purely domestic. At that time, general and complete disarmament—or "GCD," as it was familiarly called—was every government's stated goal, especially the Soviet Union's. At a Pugwash conference held in Moscow in December 1960, the Soviet delegation refused to countenance the idea of "arms control," insisting it was a U.S. formulation intended to draw all attention to issues of arms inspection. There was actually introduced a resolution to the effect that anyone who did not subscribe to GCD should be asked to leave the conference and go home. The Americans, about 18 of us,

met that evening in the hotel room of Leo Szilard, the acknowledged leader of our group. On the issue of GCD, Leo opined that it was a harmless resolution and we might as well go along with it. I vouchsafed that there were at least two in our group who did not believe in GCD. Leo, smiling, asked who the “other one” was. I said, “you.” He thought a moment, smiled, and said he’d ask them to withdraw the resolution.

Three books appeared in 1961 that epitomized an emerging consensus on what strategic arms control should be about. Each was a group effort; each stimulated discussion while it was being composed. During the summer of 1960, Hedley Bull’s manuscript for *The Control of the Arms Race* was circulated by the Institute for Strategic Studies in London in preparation for the institute’s second annual conference. In the spring of 1960 Donald Brennan organized a conference on drafts prepared for an issue of the journal *Daedalus*—papers that eventually appeared in the 1961 book. And that same summer a study group, sponsored by the Twentieth Century Fund, met on the outskirts of Boston to explore arms control; out of it came a little book that Morton H. Halperin and I produced, reflecting what we took to be a consensus. An arms control seminar, jointly sponsored by Harvard and MIT, met monthly to critique chapters of the Twentieth Century Fund book.<sup>2</sup>

When President Kennedy put together his administration at the beginning of 1961, this new arms control consensus was thoroughly represented. Members of the Harvard-MIT seminar became the president’s National Security Advisor and his White House science advisor, the general counsel of the Department of State, the assistant secretary of state for policy planning, and the deputy assistant secretary for arms control and deputy assistant secretary for Europe in the Defense Department. Eight years later, when Richard Nixon put together his administration, another member of that seminar became the president’s National Security Advisor.

Meanwhile the military services, especially the air force and army, were sending senior officers to major universities and think tanks for a year, younger officers went to universities for doctorates in subjects that included arms control, and the war colleges were including arms control in their curricula.

This substantial convergence of academic and professional military interest in arms control reflected what I think was the most important characteristic of the “new” arms control thinking. It took for granted that nuclear deterrence was here to stay for the foreseeable future. The purpose of arms control was to help make certain that deterrence worked. There was a notable absence of antimilitary spirit. Indeed, many of the ideas that came to be identified as the arms control point of view were pertinent to the unilateral shaping of military forces. Most of the academics associated with arms control probably did not consider themselves arms controllers but rather analysts of foreign policy or national security policy. Most believed

that there was no contradiction between an interest in military strategy and an interest in the possibility of collaborating with potential enemies to reduce the likelihood of a war that neither side wanted.

That is all now several decades behind us. But the legacy of that transformation is with us still in the professional quality of the thinking and in the expectation that, when professional work is produced, somebody will be listening. A difference is in the scope and diversity of the subject today. Back then, stabilizing mutual deterrence at the strategic nuclear level and avoiding any battlefield escalation into use of nuclear weapons were the overwhelmingly dominant arms control interests. (The test treaty of 1963 and the nonproliferation treaty of 1968 were mainly viewed as part of the same effort.) A quick glance at the table of contents of this book will illuminate how the subject has enlarged and matured. And a perusal of the brief biographies of the authors will illuminate the demographic breadth of the field.

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In reviewing the chapters, I find missing only one historical development to which I would have given emphasis. It is that more than half a century has passed since the first, and so far the only, use of nuclear weapons in warfare. Who could have believed fifty years ago that a new century would arrive—a new millennium—without any nuclear weapons being fired at a target? In 1960 C. P. Snow delivered a lecture, reported on the front page of the *New York Times*, declaring that unless there were drastic changes in the international arms situation a thermonuclear holocaust within a decade was a “mathematical certainty.” Yet even compounded over four decades, it still didn’t happen. Nineteen sixty was the year that full-page advertisements appeared in major newspapers for fallout shelters, to be built in your backyard or basement. Nobody appeared to think that Snow’s gloomy prediction was preposterous or even extravagant. Something quite unanticipated happened. Rather, something widely expected didn’t happen.

The first time nuclear weapons might have been used was the first stage of the Korean War. The victorious landing at Inchon made moot the question of whether nuclear weapons might have been used, but at least the question had come up. I know of no evidence that an important consideration, in the U.S. government or among the U.S. public, was apprehension of the consequences of demonstrating that these weapons were “usable,” of preempting the possibility of cultivating a tradition of nonuse.

Within a month of Dwight Eisenhower’s assuming the presidency, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, at a meeting of the National Security Council, “discussed the moral problem in the inhibitions on the use of the A-bomb. . . . It was his opinion that we should break down this false distinction.” Eight months later Dulles said, “Somehow or other we must manage to remove the taboo from the use of these weapons.” Just a few weeks later the presi-

dent approved this statement: “In the event of hostilities, the United States will consider nuclear weapons to be as available for use as other munitions.” And during the Quemoy crisis of 1955, Eisenhower said publicly, “In any combat where these things can be used on strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn’t be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else.”<sup>3</sup>

The contrast with the John Kennedy–Lyndon Johnson attitudes was beautifully summarized in a public statement of Johnson’s in September 1964. “Make no mistake. There is no such thing as a conventional nuclear weapon. For 19 peril-filled years no nation has loosed the atom against another. To do so now is a political decision of the highest order.”<sup>4</sup> Contrast, “a political decision of the highest order” with “as available for use as other munitions.” Johnson evidently felt the weight of those 19 peril-filled years.

Nuclear weapons went unused during the war in Vietnam. They went unused during the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Most impressively, the Soviets abstained in Afghanistan. I might have thought the “taboo,” the abhorrence of nuclear weapons, would not be shared by the Soviet leadership. Their willingness to fight a disastrous war—and lose it—without introducing nuclear weapons is an impressive demonstration that the taboo cuts across cultures.

I call this *arms control*. The usual definition of arms control focuses on “not acquiring” and “not deploying.” I include “not using.”

Finally, something that deserves to be identified as arms control can come about informally and even without being recognized as arms control by the participants. This was shown in the apparent understanding that a war in Europe should be kept nonnuclear if possible and that reciprocated efforts should be made to ensure this. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara began an aggressive campaign for building up conventional defenses in Europe on the grounds that nuclear weapons certainly should not be used and possibly would not be used. Throughout the 1960s the Soviet line was to deny the possibility that any engagement in Europe could be nonnuclear, even to deny that any nuclear war could be kept limited.

Yet the Soviets spent enormous amounts of money developing nonnuclear capabilities in Europe, especially aircraft capable of delivering conventional weapons. This capability was not only expensive but utterly useless in the event of any war that would be nuclear from the outset. It can only reflect a tacit Soviet acknowledgment that both sides might be capable of nonnuclear war and were vitally interested in keeping war nonnuclear.

If arms control includes expensive restraints on the potential use of weapons, as well as on their deployment, this reciprocated investment in nonnuclear capability has to be considered a remarkable instance of unacknowledged but reciprocated arms restraint.

The immediate question today is whether we can expect Indian and

Pakistani leaders to be adequately in awe of the nuclear weapons they now both possess. There are two helpful possibilities. One is that they share the inhibition—appreciate the taboo—that I have been discussing. The other is that they will recognize, as the United States and the Soviet Union did, that the prospect of nuclear retaliation makes any initiation of nuclear war nearly unthinkable.

The instances of nonuse of nuclear weapons that I've discussed were, in every case, possible use against a nonpossessor. The nonuse by the United States and the Soviet Union was differently motivated: the prospect of nuclear retaliation made any initiation appear unwise except in the worst imaginable military emergency, and that kind of military emergency never offered the temptation.

The experience of the U.S.-Soviet confrontation may impress Indians and Pakistanis. The risk is that one or the other may confront the kind of military emergency that invites some limited experiment with the weapons, and there is no history to tell us, or them, what happens next.

We can hope that this book finds readers around the world, including the Indian subcontinent.

## Notes

1. Donald G. Brennan, *Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security* (New York: George Braziller, 1961).

2. Hedley Bull, *The Control of the Arms Race* (London: Bradbury Agnew Press, 1961), and Thomas C. Schelling and Morton H. Halperin, *Strategy and Arms Control* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1961).

3. See McGeorge Bundy, *Danger and Survival: Choices About the Bomb in the First Fifty Years* (New York: Random House, 1988).

4. *New York Times*, 8 September 1964, p. 18.