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FRANK P. HARVEY

The future of strategic stability and nuclear deterrence

INTRODUCTION

Strategic stability is a catch-all expression used by scholars and practitioners to describe a set of interrelated concepts (such as mutually assured destruction), theories (for example, nuclear deterrence), policies (massive retaliation; flexible response; no-first-use), and treaties (Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty), all designed during the cold war for one purpose - to stabilize the longest nuclear rivalry in history to prevent a nuclear exchange between the United States and Russia. The key was to balance strategic forces so that each side could survive a pre-emptive nuclear attack with a sufficiently large stockpile of ballistic missiles to launch a retaliatory strike. The logic was (and remains) elegant and persuasive - so long as the retaliatory (second) strike threatened sufficient devastation, there would be no rational reason to launch first.

Policy-makers throughout the cold war were preoccupied with three central questions: What deters? How much is enough? And what if deterrence fails? The enormous appeal of nuclear deterrence theory was its simple (and impeccable) logic, which provided straightforward answers to the core questions and guidelines for how to achieve deterrence stability. To work well, according to the theory, the balance of

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strategic forces had to promise *crisis stability* so that neither side would perceive an advantage in escalating violence in a crisis; *arms race stability* to minimize incentives to build more weapons; and *survivability* to maximize second-strike potential and *mutual vulnerability*.¹

Although the perfect balance of air-, land-, and sea-launched strategic missiles was never entirely clear, there was one principle to which both sides adhered - nationwide ballistic missile defence systems were to be prohibited. In the context of a highly charged and competitive cold war environment, national defence systems would be provocative, destabilizing, and exceedingly dangerous. They would undermine crisis stability by increasing pressure in a conflict to pre-empt so as to overwhelm the opponent's defences, jeopardize mutual vulnerability by making an opponent's second-strike less threatening (and a first-strike less costly and more rational), and create enormous incentives for vertical proliferation.

The United States decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and to accelerate the testing and deployment of a limited, layered ballistic missile defence system by 2004 obviously raises important questions about the future of strategic stability and the evolution of nuclear deterrence. Given Canada's longstanding commitment to the nuclear arms control, non-proliferation, and disarmament regime (NACD), itself founded on principles, theories, and doctrines developed throughout the cold war, the demise of the treaty raises equally important questions for Canadian officials who remain exclusively committed to multilateral arms control.

How significant are these decisions? Do they indicate fundamental shifts in US-Russian nuclear doctrine? Is the shift permanent, especially in the aftermath of the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001? What are the implications for the future of strategic stability? Are the concepts (mutual assured destruction or MAD), theories (deterrence), policies and treaties (ABM) that were the cornerstones of strategic stability still valid and/or relevant? Do we need a more complex approach to strategic stability and arms control that acknowledges

¹ Colin S. Gray, 'The definitions and assumptions of deterrence: questions of theory and practice,' *Journal of Strategic Studies* 13(December 1990), 6, 13; Christopher H. Achen and Duncan Snidal, 'Rational deterrence theory and comparative case studies,' *World Politics* 41(January 1989); Edward Rhodes, 'Nuclear weapons and credibility: deterrence theory beyond rationality,' *Review of International Studies* 14(January 1988).

emerging threats of terrorism and proliferation to new and aspiring nuclear powers? If so, what would a future oriented approach to deterrence and arms control encompass? Finally, what are the implications for Canada and Canadian policies and preferences for multilateral approaches to security?

STRATEGIC STABILITY IN TRANSITION CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Although the cold war officially ended over a decade ago, we are only now experiencing the effects of a transition from one nuclear environment to another.² The transition is producing a paradigm shift in how we view the dominant nuclear relationship between the US and Russia, the evolving nuclear relationship with China, and emerging nuclear relationships with new and aspiring proliferators.

Adjustments in nuclear strategies have been relatively slow because transitions, by definition, encompass both 'continuity' and 'change,' with features of the old and new nuclear environments interacting simultaneously. This explains why it is so difficult to resolve policy debates about the future of strategic stability - both sides are right and wrong about some things, and both sides can produce evidence to support some of their core arguments. The result is a collection of mutually exclusive conclusions that bipolar strategic stability is relevant and irrelevant; nuclear deterrence theory is valid and invalid; mutually assured destruction is appropriate and inappropriate; the ABM treaty is essential and obsolete; and ballistic missile defence (BMD) is stabilizing and destabilizing.

The position one takes in each debate depends almost exclusively on perceptions of *change*, particularly with respect to the dominant nuclear rivalry. And perceptions of change in turn depend on whether one focuses on numbers or on relationships. Those who claim that very little has changed since the end of the cold war tend to focus on numbers of nuclear weapons and the current balance of air-, land-, and sea-launched nuclear forces in the US and Russian arsenals. Those who believe the system has undergone fundamental and permanent change are more likely to focus on the constantly improving relationship between the US and Russia and deteriorating relations between the US

² See Colin S. Gray, *The Second Nuclear Age* (New York: Lynne Rienner 1999); and Keith B. Payne, *Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky 1996).

and new or emerging proliferators. The relevant question is whether 'numbers' determine the health and stability of a nuclear relationship or whether the health of a nuclear relationship determines the relevance and stability of numbers.

CONTINUITY AND THE STABILITY OF NUMBERS

Proponents of the continuity thesis argue that as long as there are large numbers of nuclear weapons, and as long as abolition is excluded as a serious policy option, the US and Russia will maintain 'military sufficiency' to render enemy nuclear forces ineffective and to extend deterrence to allies. Since nuclear deterrence stability is a property of the balance in nuclear weapons, cold war or no cold war, the number of existing weapons will remain important to strategic decisions made by both sides. By extension, mutual deterrence and traditional approaches to bipolar strategic stability will (and should) continue to be a defining characteristic of the international system.

If one focuses on numbers and assumes that the 'nuclear balance' has a logic and force of its own, then the level of conflict and co-operation between nuclear rivals will always depend on that logical imperative. In other words, the health and stability of a nuclear rivalry is a function of that balance.³ If that is true, then the thousands of Russian nuclear weapons and materials that still exist remain the main threat to US survival today. Therefore, protecting the 'balance' is crucial, and, by implication, the ABM treaty and associated MAD doctrine are also essential to US security.⁴

Those who focus on numbers are also more inclined to be critical of BMD and to reject any move that undermines the rigid and well defined requirements of traditional, bipolar strategic stability. The emphasis on numbers is apparent in virtually every major critique of BMD by academics, Russian generals, European officials, editors of major newspapers, and sceptics in the US Senate and House - all of whom focus almost exclusively on existing numbers of nuclear weapons and the 'parity principle' underlying bipolar strategic stability. And all point to the devastating consequences of an 'imbalance' caused by withdrawal

3 Scott Peterson, 'us grand plan proves hard sell yesterday, Russia rebuffed a Bush proposal that would lift barrier against us national missile shield,' *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 August 2001.

4 See John Rhinelander, 'ABM Treaty - Anachronism or Cornerstone?' Presentation to US Senate Staff, 5 November 1999, available at www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/nuclear/Isaacs121799.html.

from the ABM treaty and MAD via deployment of BMD.⁵ If the balance is not protected, the relationship deteriorates.

It is important to note that the numbers debate is significantly more complex than the version described above; only the broad parameters of thought concerning stability in a bipolar world are presented here. My purpose is not to provide a primer on deterrence theory or a comprehensive review of the many nuanced debates about the precise numerical prerequisites for strategic stability. While many analysts believed that parity in nuclear weapons was important to stability and deterrence, others were far less concerned. The possession of assured second-strike forces capable of inflicting 'unacceptable damage' in a retaliatory strike, rather than 'assured destruction,' was key. Although assured destruction was sufficient for strategic stability, it wasn't necessary - far fewer weapons were required to establish the 'unacceptable damage' benchmark. As McGeorge Bundy argued, 'in the real world of real political leaders - whether here or in the Soviet Union - a decision that would bring even one hydrogen bomb on one city of one's own country would be recognized in advance as a catastrophic blunder.'⁶ Others, such as Colin Gray, argued that many more were required for war-fighting dominance, that is, to assure survival of a first strike and to allow retaliation of sufficient force to win a nuclear war.⁷ The distinction was noted by Rajesh Rajagopalan: 'Assured Destruction suggested that the Soviet Union would be foolish to attack because nobody could possibly win a nuclear war, while victory theorists proposed that the Soviet Union would not attack only if it was convinced that not only would it lose the war, but that the US would win it.'⁸ Of

5 For academics who emphasize numbers see www.mi.infn.it/~landnet/NMD/kapralov.pdf; for editors of major newspapers www.clw.org/coalition/briefv5n14.htm; for Russian generals www.chinadaily.net/highlights/docs/2001-04-29/2711.html; and for Senate Democratic leader John Kerry www.politicsol.com/guest-commentaries/2001-05-14.html. Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George W. Rathjens ('Nuclear weapons after the cold war,' *Foreign Affairs* 70[autumn 1991], 106-107) conclude that 'although we have no quarrel with estimates on how much is enough, nor with most of the other discussions of minimum deterrence in the last three decades, the size of the force required for the purpose depends on the size of others' nuclear forces.'

6 McGeorge Bundy, 'To cap the volcano,' *Foreign Affairs* 48(October 1969), 9-10.

7 Colin S. Gray, 'Nuclear strategy: a case for a theory of victory,' *International Security* 4(summer 1979), 54-87.

8 Rajesh Rajagopalan, 'Nuclear strategy and small nuclear forces: the conceptual,' *Strategic Analysis* 23(October 1999), available at www.idsa-india.org/an-oct9-5.html

course, those who are convinced that assured destruction is sufficient are less likely to be concerned about BMD because no system would be sufficiently robust to ensure protection against the thousands of missiles currently held by the US and Russia. In fact, even at significantly lower numbers the strategic weapons on both sides would be more than sufficient to overcome even a very advanced BMD system.

Change and the Stability of Relationships

But deterrence stability is not, and perhaps never was, about numbers (regardless of one's views on how much is enough). The issue has always been about relationships.⁹ Focussing exclusively on numbers is misleading for several reasons, not the least of which is that existing stockpiles in Russia have more to do with bureaucratic inertia, public indifference to nuclear matters, and the costs of dismantling huge arsenals.¹⁰ Current levels of nuclear weapons are not the determining feature of the US-Russia strategic relationship - they are the legacy of cold war hostility.¹¹

The degree to which numbers matter depends entirely on whether the relationship is stable. And stability depends not on the balance of numbers, but on the balance of incentives to co-operate - low numbers of nuclear weapons are dangerous under the wrong conditions, high numbers are stabilizing under the right conditions, and high or low

9 See 'A Post-Cold War Nuclear Strategy Model - Introduction: Framing the Question,' available at www.usafa.af.mil/inss/ocp20.htm. Of course, this is not to suggest that numbers are irrelevant - domestic imperatives will force Russia officials to continue to push the numbers game, but that has more to do with politics than strategic stability.

10 Alexei G. Arbitov, 'The Future of Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Postures of Great Powers,' Institute for National Strategic Studies, www.ndu.edu/inss/books/usrp13.html, 2.

11 A more reliable indicator of the relationship than stockpiles can be found in Russian procurement and deployment plans. See Wolfgang K.H. Panofsky, 'The remaining unique role of nuclear weapons in post-cold war deterrence,' in *Post Cold-War Conflict Deterrence*, chap 7 (Washington DC: Naval Studies Board Commission on Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Applications, National Research Council, National Academy Press 1997). According to Panofsky: 'Today such figures are overestimates for required deterrent forces against a possible reemergence of a Russian nuclear threat: Russia contains only parts of the former economic assets of the former Soviet Union and its military basing structure. Thus the core purpose against the reemergence of an aggressive Russia requires forces only a small fraction of those contemplated for START II. Under the core deterrent role of nuclear weapons, the "hedge" provided by the NPR is unnecessary and large reductions below START II levels are feasible.'

numbers are potentially irrelevant under changing conditions.¹² One need look no further than US-Britain-France relations to appreciate the irrelevance of nuclear numbers under the right conditions. Even though deployment of a US BMD would undermine the deterrent value of British and French nuclear forces, this concern does not enter the consciousness of European officials, for obvious reasons - the relationship renders such calculations meaningless, if not absurd, even in the context of strained US-European alliance ties in the aftermath of the US-UK led war on Iraq in 2003.

This is not to suggest that US relations with Russia are as stable as those with European allies, but, to the extent that the post-cold war relationship with Russia continues to improve, the relevance of numbers will continue to diminish. Expanding levels of economic co-operation, interdependence, and, in Russia's case, vulnerability have created an environment in which large-scale conflict involving those major powers is increasingly remote and, for many reasons, obsolete. Economic and trade relationships are far more useful than military competition in predicting interactions between the United States and Russia, and there is no compelling reason to expect this to change. Indeed, Russian officials are now more inclined to define strategic stability in terms of assured economic viability, not assured destruction. Survival of the Russian state depends less on the balance of nuclear forces and more on the Russian economy and foreign investment from the US, Europe, and Asia.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of the transformation in US-Russian nuclear relations was Moscow's quiet acquiescence to Washington's decision to withdraw from the ABM treaty. Given the incredibly dire warnings of critics that Russia would be forced to proliferate in response to the death of the treaty, the relatively benign reaction from Moscow is perhaps the clearest indication that Russian officials understand the true motivations driving US preferences and priorities - proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to rogue states and regimes.

12 On the propensity to overplay and exaggerate Russia's concerns about a US first strike, see www.russiajournal.co.uk/15/defense/defense111-Let-us-have-its-NMS-150-and-modified-ABM-pact.html - 'Of all the Russian politicians, military officials and experts who say the American plan represents a military threat to Russia, it's unlikely any of them seriously believe this. There's no reason to believe that Bush needs NMD in order to be able to launch a sudden first strike against Russia without fear of retaliation.' On transformations in US-Russian relations, see www.mi.infn.it/~landnet/NMD/fisher.pdf

James Lindsay and Michael O'Hanlon caution that claims about a new strategic climate can be pushed a little too far:¹³ Russia and the United States are not allies in the traditional sense and both retain suspicions about their opponent's intentions (for example, the 1999 war against Serbia). But the tensions associated with US-Russian contemporary crises (including fundamental disagreements over the US-UK led intervention in Iraq in 2003) cannot compare to the level of conflict (and associated stress) experienced by both sides in their many cold war crises. In fact, the lesson from Kosovo (1999) is that, despite NATO bombing of a Russian ally for 78 days straight, Russia refused to send even a single ship to the region and, in the end, demanded from Slobodan Milošević the same concessions requested by NATO. The lesson from NATO expansion is that Russian political and security interests can be accommodated in the new NATO-Russia Council (replacing the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council); and Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) demonstrates that, despite fundamental disagreements and associated threats of United Nations Security Council vetoes, the war in Iraq did very little to undermine the post-cold war US-Russia relationship.

Like Russia, China is fully (and constructively) engaged with the US in an international economic system that is extremely beneficial to both sides. There are powerful incentives to ensure the relationship remains stable and to prevent crises from escalating out of control. That is why, notwithstanding blatant human rights abuses by China in Tibet and during the demonstrations in Tienanmen Square in 1989, the US repeatedly assigned most-favoured-nation status to trade with China. It also explains China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 and why it will host the 2008 Olympic games, without a hint of US opposition. US-China relations take place in a world in which US diplomats struggle to select perfect phrases for meticulously worded diplomatic communiqués to de-escalate tensions during the US/NATO B-2 stealth bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade on 7 May 1999 or over the downing of the US Navy EP-3 spy plane in 2001. With respect to the latter, a decidedly conciliatory approach was deemed by US officials to be essential, even though the

¹³ James M. Lindsay and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Defending America: The Case for Limited National Missile Defense* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press 2001).

Chinese pilot was responsible for risking the lives of 24 American crew flying over international waters.

Again, the objective is not to overstate the extent of US-China co-operation or to exclude the possibility of future crises over, for example, Taiwan or North Korea. It is rather that an overwhelming body of evidence appears to support the view that US-China (and US-Russia) relations are driven by enormous pressures to co-operate to resolve crises peacefully and as quickly as possible. In contrast, US relations with new and aspiring nuclear powers are unstable, unpredictable, and far less manageable because the balance of incentives does not yet favour co-operation.

That is not to say that 'established' nuclear powers will always conduct their regional diplomacy responsibly or maintain nuclear arsenals that are fully safe and secure. In fact, one of the reasons BMD makes sense is precisely because it is so difficult for any major nuclear power to maintain strategic arsenals that are perfectly safe. BMD creates another layer of defence against failed technology and provides additional options that avoid exclusive reliance on massive retaliation following an accidental launch.

More importantly, even if claims of improved US relations with Russia and China are exaggerated, and even if both decide to expand their arsenals to re-establish 'mutual vulnerability' in response to US BMD deployment, the issue for US policy-makers will always be one of comparative risk.¹⁴ If China doubles or triples the number of ICBMs in its nuclear arsenal over the next ten to fifteen years (for whatever reason), or deploys MIRV (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle) technology to create a more robust retaliatory threat, the associated security risks will always be less significant to US decision-makers than the risks of even one nuclear weapon deployed by Iraq, North Korea, or any other 'state of concern.' When it comes to comparing risks, Russian or Chinese proliferation is easier to deal with and certainly less threatening, which explains why the administration of George W. Bush will likely withdraw objections to Chinese plans to modernize its

14 On the many reasons China will modernize its nuclear programme regardless of US BMD deployment, see, for example, Frank P. Harvey, 'National missile defence revisited, again: a response to David Mutimer,' *International Journal* 56(Spring 2001), 347-360; and Harvey, 'Proliferation, rogue-state threats and national missile defence: assessing European concerns and interests,' *Canadian Military Journal* 1(winter 2000-2001), 69-79.

nuclear force - a relatively minor concession considering that Chinese modernization is inevitable regardless of US BMD deployment.

Economic interdependence and mutual vulnerability associated with trade and financial markets will increasingly emerge as the dominant force in relations between major powers, including major nuclear powers.¹⁵ Consistent with expectations derived from an expanding web of interdependencies and vulnerabilities, we can expect ongoing improvements in co-operative relations between East and West - any other outcome makes no rational sense for either side. Thus, there is little need for large numbers of nuclear weapons to stabilize the relationships, and, to the extent that large numbers of weapons exist at all, they are likely to become increasingly meaningless.¹⁶ On the other hand, security against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to hostile states and regimes and threats associated with globalized terrorism will continue to drive US foreign and security policy.

Two important implications follow. First, the US-Russian and US-China relationship will continue to evolve throughout this transition. Although levels of co-operation will ebb and flow, the threshold for escalation of crises with China or Russia is significantly higher today than it has ever been, and it is likely to become higher in the future. There is no conceivable scenario that would reproduce a cold war crisis today, or in the foreseeable future, that would come close to reproducing a situation in which nuclear use would be contemplated.

Second, policies that would have been provocative and dangerous during the cold war are now entirely conceivable and far less threatening. There is no reason today to expect a unilateral reduction of US offensive weapons, along with simultaneous increases in expenditures on defensive systems, to be destabilizing. The reason is obvious - there is no credible scenario that would realistically take us to the brink of a contemporary (or future) crisis in which American officials would consider (for a second) a pre-emptive first strike against Russia and/or China - even assuming the United States develops and perfects a shield capable of destroying every single missile, decoy, and countermeasure

15 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, Jr, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (2nd ed; Boston MA: Little, Brown 1989).

16 John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books 1989).

Russia and China would launch in retaliation. In other words, the probability of a crisis provoking a pre-emptive first strike is virtually zero. Russia and China are not likely to give the United States reason to contemplate nuclear use, and the US has no rational incentive to pursue a course of action that would provoke a nuclear response from China, Russia, or, for that matter, North Korea.

Sceptics who concede that deterrence stability is indeed more about relationships than numbers might still argue that any action that threatens to remove one state from the condition of mutual vulnerability (whether in the form of 'assured destruction' or 'unacceptable damage') is qualitatively different from minor disparities in force levels. Actions that impinge on the condition of mutual vulnerability, they might argue, could affect relationships profoundly. Thus, one should caution against the conclusion that numbers are somehow completely irrelevant to the character of deterrent relationships. Several points should be noted in response to these important observations.

First, the most relevant question from the perspective of risks is whether the US BMD system will come close to removing states from the condition of mutual vulnerability. Given the number of weapons deployed by Russia and China, nothing in current or future US deployment plans justifies that concern. Second, even if mutual vulnerability (in the bipolar strategic stability sense) is jeopardized, US policy-makers will always compare the risks of that environment with the costs and risks assigned to the status quo. Doing nothing to address proliferation of WMD to new and aspiring nuclear powers will never be perceived (by current or future US administrations) as cost free. Third, risk and cost assessments are rarely measured in isolation, or in terms of specific threats (for example, the risks of Chinese proliferation in response to BMD deployment). Rather, they are assessed in terms of their capacity to deal with a multiplicity of interdependent threats and enemies. Strategies designed to address one set of threats (for example, BMD to defend against proliferation of WMD by rogue regimes) could conceivably exacerbate other threats (Chinese proliferation in response to BMD deployment), but choices have to be made. In comparative terms, Chinese proliferation is less threatening than proliferation by North Korea because it is thought that leaders in Beijing are more attuned to (and motivated by) the economic, political, and military forces that typically guide relations between states.

MULTIPLE FUTURES OF STRATEGIC STABILITY:
FROM SIMPLICITY TO COMPLEXITY

Having made the case that deterrence is about relationships, not numbers, and having established that US-China-Russia relations continue to evolve and improve in fundamental and irreversible ways, the question remains: how should the concept of mutual nuclear deterrence and strategic stability be modified from its bilateral meaning to address the problem of deterring potential proliferators? The meaning of strategic stability in 2003 is significantly different from what it was in 1973, and it will be significantly different in 2033. Any policy that refuses to acknowledge the need for change is not only short-sighted, it is dangerous.

During the cold war, the logic of strategic stability dictated that responsible, rational leaders would refrain from hostilities that would threaten the survival of their nation and their leadership or their capacity to fight and win a war.¹⁷ Deterrence in the context of bipolar nuclear rivalry, therefore, was relatively straightforward because the dominant relationship was simple - one enemy, one threat, one strategy. But if deterrence is primarily about 'relationships,' as old threats diminish, as new threats emerge, and as bipolarity collapses under the weight of multipolar pressures, a complex mix of strategies will be needed to address new and evolving relationships.

Three important implications follow from this observation. First, 'we can no longer construct a security strategy and policy around the belief that sheer numbers and firepower will deter aggression generally; we must create better, more specific, focused policies and strategies with better technology for the job ... Post-Cold War deterrence will require creating forces that can offer a credible deterrent on these new terms.'¹⁸ That does not mean that the logic of bipolar strategic stability is obsolete, only that the relevance of policies derived from that logic is diminishing as new friendships and rivalries emerge. The requirements for deterrence stability are increasingly complex and will demand flexible approaches - there is no longer one single version of strategic stability.¹⁹ Second, not only will the number of nuclear

17 Wolfgang K.H Panofsky, 'The remaining unique role.'

18 Paul H. Nitze and J.H. McCall, 'Contemporary strategic deterrence and precision-guided munitions,' chap 5, in *Post Cold-War Conflict Deterrence*.

19 *ibid*.

deterrence relationships multiply but they will also be more interdependent and inter-linked, so that decisions and strategies in one setting will increasingly affect the stability of other relationships (positively and/or negatively).

Third, future deterrence strategies must be able to discriminate between opponents and tailor deterrent threats in more select, context-specific ways. Perhaps the best statement of how deterrence will change in a post-cold war setting can be found in a 1988 US Defense Department report.²⁰ 'Discriminate deterrence' focuses on the realities of asymmetric threats and emphasizes a range of contingencies that go beyond the two extreme threats that have always dominated force planning, namely, a Warsaw pact attack on central Europe and a pre-emptive nuclear attack by Russia. The point about discriminate deterrence is that the conditions required for deterrence success in the past (credibility, commitment, resolve, and the capability to inflict unacceptable damage) are less likely to work for future threats involving states, regimes, and transnational terrorist groups with no proven channels of communication, no shared assumptions about crisis management, few cultural similarities, and no economic incentives to guide preferences. In the future, threats will have to be tailored to specific opponents and specific acts.

Of course, if future deterrence success depends on the capacity to become actor- and situation-specific, then maintaining a deterrence system based solely on the logic of mutual vulnerability and bipolar strategic stability is likely to be exceedingly dangerous. This is precisely the predicament the US would have faced if it continued to be confined by the ABM treaty and MAD.

As for 'how much is enough,' future US and Russian force requirements will be more difficult to estimate as the system becomes more complex. In the past, a truly meaningful assessment of the numbers required for strategic stability focused on several interdependent vari-

20 Fred Ikle, Albert Wohlstetter, *et al*, *Discriminate Deterrence: Report of the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office for the Department of Defense 1988).

21 They include, but are not limited to: a) characteristics of specific adversaries are essential for determining locations, types, and number of targets; b) targeting strategies determine the extent to which counter-value or counter-force targeting will be used (counter-force strategies require more targets); c) survivability and vulnerability vary from context to context and dictate whether multiple platforms or basing modes will be required to counter surprise attacks; d) both active (NMD/BMD)

ables.²¹ These considerations will remain central to nuclear force planning in the future, but it will become increasingly difficult to make accurate estimates of each variable for each opponent across a complex set of scenarios. A definitive account of appropriate numbers applicable for all relationships will be virtually impossible. The propensity to err on the side of caution, therefore, will result in deployment of more rather than fewer weapons - another reason why abolition will never be a serious policy option.

THE FUTURE OF ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT: CODIFICATION VS CO-ORDINATION

Bipolar nuclear deterrence is no longer sufficient to accommodate changing circumstances, but it is not the only policy ripe for modification. Similar challenges apply to dominant approaches to nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, namely: prevention, transparency, verification, monitoring, import/export controls, pre-emption, conventional deterrence, diplomacy (for example, constructive engagement), and codification.

There are three general problems with these policy alternatives: a) they failed throughout the cold war to prevent the spread of nuclear and ballistic missile technology; b) they are incapable of providing sufficient levels of security to render nuclear weapons obsolete; and c) they are insufficient (and inappropriate) to address current and future security threats. But, in spite of the need for change, the arms control and disarmament community continues to defend status quo policies as if they were the only legitimate options. There are several problems with each approach.

Prevention

Consider for a moment the following NACD failures (a list that continues to grow): the inability to enter into force of the second Strategic Arms Reduction treaty (START II); the lack of serious negotiations on START III; re-affirmation by major powers of the need for nuclear

and passive (mobility, dispersal, redundancy, deception, concealment, hardening, and so on) remain important, but will vary from case to case; e) intelligence about targets also affects the size of an arsenal (less intelligence means more targets), but intelligence-gathering becomes more difficult as the number of rivals proliferates; g) pre-launch survivability, system reliability, penetration capability, delivery accuracy, and so on all have an impact on numbers (for example, the more reliable the systems, the fewer weapons required).

weapons (such as NATO's New Strategic Doctrine, US Presidential Directive 60, Russia's revised nuclear policy); refusal by Russian, American, and European (NATO) officials to accept a relatively straightforward commitment to 'no-first-use'; the persistence of tactical nuclear weapons and their inclusion in nuclear force planning doctrine; south Asian nuclear tests and subsequent decisions by Western powers to lift economic sanctions against India and Pakistan; the impending demise of the Comprehensive Test Ban and Anti-Ballistic Missile treaties; proliferation of weapons technology to outer space; failure of the Non-proliferation treaty (NPT) to stop signatories and non-signatories from spreading and acquiring nuclear material and weapons technology; and so on. If we are indeed on the verge of devaluing the currency of nuclear weapons because of an apparent consensus that such weapons are absurd, unethical, and immoral, why is this absurdity spreading? There are two possible answers: 1) the leaders of new and aspiring nuclear states don't understand how incredibly absurd and foolish this is, or 2) members of the arms control and disarmament community can't quite grasp how perfectly rational it is.

Regardless of whether one looks at the supply or the demand side of any dimension of proliferation, the evidence does not favour the optimists.²² It takes only one nuclear weapon to produce the catastrophe the NPT was designed to prevent. The simple fact is more states now have the capability to inflict that level of damage and devastation. Despite years of effort by the international community to prevent the spread of ballistic missile technology from the supply and demand side, WMD technology continues apace, and proponents of the status quo provide almost no evidence that the proliferation puzzle can be resolved in the future using the same techniques.

Some optimists point to decreased arms expenditures by rogue states as evidence that something must be working. 'Taking Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and North Korea as a group: since the late 1980s their military spending has fallen 70 percent; their arms imports are barely 10 per-

22 On nuclear theft and related dangers, see www.stimson.org/policy/nuclear dangers.htm; on proliferation by rogue states, see Debra Mohanty, 'Defence industries in a changing world: trends and options,' *Strategic Analysis* (January 2000); on emerging regional threats, see the 'Strategic Assessment Reports, Briefings, and Books,' available at www.csis.org/stratassessment. For an arms control optimist's view, see Joseph Cirincione and Frank von Hippel, 'The last 15 minutes: ballistic missile defence in perspective'; available at www.stimson.org/coalitio/last15.htm (Washington DC: Stimson Center, October 2000).

cent of what they once were ... More generally, without the technical support, funds, and arms once provided by superpower patrons, yesterday's rogue giants have lost the capacity to equip, train, sustain, or employ armed forces of the size and quality typical of the 1980s.'

But the implication of these trends is that 'rogue' leaders will become more reliant on asymmetric threats, ballistic missiles and WMD because these alternatives are more affordable.²³

Arms control advocates continue to push for improved transparency, weapons verification, monitoring, and various import/export controls, all of which are considered more constructive than ballistic missile defence because they approach the proliferation problem from the demand and supply sides and produce none of the costs and risks associated with BMD. But proponents of these approaches rarely provide the details policy-makers need to compare success and failure (or strengths and weaknesses). How much has the international community spent on these strategies? What exactly do we have to show for all of the efforts and investments? And what is the probability that they will work in the future? Answers to these questions should be compared to answers offered by proponents of BMD.

Pre-emption and Conventional Deterrence

A successful pre-emptive attack needs accurate intelligence about the location of enemy missiles, domestic and international support for the attack, sufficient (locally deployed) military capabilities, and a political leadership willing to take the risks and incur the costs. Pre-emption may appear to be a relatively straightforward solution to the problem of proliferation, but such strikes are very difficult to mount for political and operational reasons. Again, proponents rarely provide details about operational criteria or conditions under which a pre-emptive strike would be justified.

With respect to conventional deterrence, a common assertion among critics of BMD is that the US is more than capable of retaliating with a devastating conventional strike. The capability to disable or destroy targets quickly (without suffering many casualties) is a credible deterrent that makes BMD redundant and a waste of time and money. Rational rogue leaders would never provoke the kind of devastation

23 'The paradoxes of post-cold war us defense policy: an agenda for the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review,' Project on Defense Alternatives, Briefing Memo #18, 5 February 2001, www.comw.org/pda/o102bmemo18.html.

the US is capable of inflicting on its enemies, or so the argument goes. There are at least three problems with this argument.

First, conventional retaliation will never rise to the potency of a nuclear threat because the risks of suffering even a large conventional attack will always be more acceptable than a nuclear strike. Despite suffering a devastating loss against a US-led coalition in 1991, Saddam Hussein was willing to risk another war against a US-led coalition in 2003. As Victor Utgoff points out, 'history provides many cases of states standing up to conventional bombardment for years ... Nuclear retaliation is universally and deeply feared and thus has unmatched psychological power as a deterrent ... Although conventional retaliation may be an adequate deterrent in some cases, its prospect has far less deterrent power than that of nuclear retaliation.'²⁴ The Taliban in Afghanistan (2001) and Saddam Hussein's regime prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003) are the latest illustrations of the deficiencies of conventional forces to provide a sufficiently potent deterrent threat, even when the military in question is the most powerful in history and even if the probability of a rapid and successful US military campaign is very high.

Second, and paradoxically, conventional superiority increases incentives for nuclear proliferation. Successful interventions in Iraq (1990), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2002), and in 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' (2003) create the very incentives for leaders in Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Libya to acquire and deploy ballistic missile technology as quickly as possible - to prevent similar losses in the future.

Third, leaders face several operational problems in applying conventional deterrence in contemporary crises. For example, a credible deterrent force requires a large 'power projection' capability to intervene to protect US interests, a capability that is expensive to maintain and entails 'a complex of naval, air, and ground forces and their support. To operate these forces effectively requires an overseas base network, which [the US is] losing, and a forcible entry capability, which is doubly challenging especially if there are no local bases to rely on.'²⁵

²⁴ Victor Utgoff, 'Extended nuclear deterrence and coalitions for defending against regional challengers armed with weapons of mass destruction,' chap 6, in *Post Cold-War Conflict Deterrence*.

²⁵ John C. Hopkins and Steven A. Maaranen, 'Nuclear weapons in post-cold war deterrence, Los Alamos National Laboratory,' chap 8, in *ibid*.

The point is that localized conventional superiority requires a large standing force to project a reliable and credible deterrent threat. All of this is extremely costly, far more expensive than the current budget for BMD.

Constructive Engagement

As for constructive engagement, there simply is no persuasive evidence that it has worked in the past and no reason to expect that it will work in the future. More than a decade of constructive engagement between the US and China has done little to stop China's modernization plans or to prevent it from selling advanced nuclear and missile technology to aspiring nuclear powers. More importantly, proponents of constructive engagement have yet to provide a logical explanation for why their preferred strategy should be expected to work at all. Improving economic relations with Iran, Iraq (by, for example, lifting economic sanctions - as was recommended by France and Russia throughout the 1990s), and North Korea would provide the very capital those states need to augment their WMD and ballistic weapons facilities.

Canada's decision to establish full diplomatic recognition of North Korea is a case in point. The objective was to use diplomacy to convince the regime to abandon its plans to develop and sell long-range missiles. But increasing the attention paid to North Korea has sent the wrong message to aspiring nuclear weapons states - acquire, develop, deploy, and sell ballistic missile technology as soon as you can because that is the quickest path to international respect, diplomatic recognition, and bargaining leverage over the US to gain additional economic concessions. North Korean leaders are not likely to change course, especially if their strategy appears to be working.

Indeed, North Korea's decision to restart its nuclear weapons programme is the most recent illustration of the emerging collapse of the non-proliferation regime, associated treaties, and the policy of constructive engagement. Like many other multilateral arms control agreements, signatories often ignore both the demand and the supply side of their NPT obligations. If states maintain an official commitment to the treaty yet continue to acquire and sell weapons of mass destruction, then how relevant is the NPT in addressing the proliferation problem? That is the true measure of success or failure. The NPT is certainly not dead in the same sense as the ABM treaty is, but nor is it alive and well.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the re-emergence of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme is the fact that officials in Pyongyang are demanding negotiations with the US alone and prefer to avoid dialogue with the United Nations (through the International Atomic Energy Agency), the European Union, South Korea, or any other state or international organization. Ironically, the decision in Washington to focus on the 2003 Iraq crisis and to let the international community deal with North Korea through multilateral mechanisms is criticized by multilateralists who want greater unilateral initiative from the Americans.

Codification

Perhaps the most significant problem with the current NACD regime is the fundamental assumption that codification is a necessary condition for success. Proponents assume that the only way to control the spread of WMD, or to establish meaningful cuts in the nuclear arsenals of major powers, is to tie those states rigidly to a set of specific rules, regulations, and guidelines for the rest of time. In this view, the only path to collective security is to ensure that states recognize the supremacy of international law and acquiesce to its tenets, principles, and treaties, regardless of their defects. The assumption is that until and unless nuclear weapons states remain absolutely committed to specific codified limits stipulated in standardized arms control agreements we will never experience 'real' security.

There are several problems with 'codification' that advocates rarely acknowledge, four of which are discussed here. First, codification closes options. That may appeal to those who continue to rely exclusively on bilateral approaches to strategic stability, but it is not likely to appeal to those responsible for identifying security strategies for new and emerging WMD threats.

Second, 'irreversible codification' diminishes incentives to enter into good agreements, even if potential signatories accept the principles and objectives underlying the treaty in question.²⁶ The current impasse in the US over the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty is a case in point - the US continues to abide by the ban but refuses to be tied indefinitely to

²⁶ Keith B. Payne, 'Deterrence and US strategic force requirements after the cold war,' *Comparative Strategy* 9(July-September 1990), 269-82; and Keith B. Payne and Lawrence Falk, 'Deterrence: gambling on perfection,' *Strategic Review* 1(winter 1989), 25-40.

its limits. When major threats are assumed to be static and unchanging (as they were throughout the cold war) codified agreements are perceived as less risky. But as security threats change and become more complex (as they are today), codified agreements that limit options carry far more security risks.

Third, codification makes it more difficult to withdraw from potentially dangerous agreements that maintain force numbers at artificially high levels, as in the ABM treaty.²⁷ That treaty compels both sides to field forces large enough to maintain mutually assured destruction, not because the relationship requires this balance, but because the logic of bipolar strategic stability demands these numbers. Indeed, the 'parity principle' perpetuates an obsolete code of conduct that maintains force numbers for mutual annihilation that Washington does not want, Moscow cannot afford, and the relationship does not demand.

CANADIAN 'MULTILATERAL' ALTERNATIVES TO BMD

The main preoccupation for US and Russian force planners in future will be how to accommodate bipolar strategic stability with the American need to address emerging ballistic missile threats. How do you reconcile nuclear deterrence in a bipolar context with discriminate deterrence in a multipolar setting?

The 'how' of BMD will be resolved in favour of a limited, multiple platform (land, sea, and air), layered (boost, mid-course, and entry level) missile defence system. Following another successful fully integrated test in July 2002, the Bush administration is moving quickly to construct radar and interceptor sites in Alaska and California and to speed up the BMD testing schedule.

Bipolar strategic stability and deterrence will be redefined in the context of contemporary international politics or it will cease to be relevant. While the logic of mutual nuclear deterrence is impeccable, its relevance will continue to vary from context to context, depending on the health of the relationship in question. In a post-cold war world, stability must be expanded to accommodate the realities of a

27 Keith B. Payne, 'Rational requirements for U.S. nuclear forces and arms control: executive report,' *Comparative Strategy* 20(May 2001), 105-28. See also the discussion of the evolution of nuclear deterrence theory after the cold war in James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, eds, *Contending Theories of International Relations* (5th ed; New York: Longman 2001), 374-86.

complex international system with expanding sets of interlinking and interdependent nuclear relationships.²⁸

The critical policy puzzle is to find the right balance of mutual and discriminate deterrence to enhance both bilateral and multilateral stability. The challenge for US policy-makers is to develop a defensive system with sufficient transparency and predictability to convey clearly to Russia and China that it is indeed directed against third parties.²⁹

The paradigm shift towards a new nuclear age will also affect the NACD regime and associated strategies. Co-ordination and consultation, not codification, will become the cornerstone of the regime. Rather than codifying numeric goals and expecting them to be valid over time, complexity dictates that states will increasingly choose to retain the prerogative to adapt to changing circumstances and will avoid irreversible restriction by artificially rigid rules and regulations.³⁰ Artificial competition, adversarial negotiations, never-ending bargaining periods that typically are drawn out for years (often for purely domestic political reasons), detailed verification procedures, and so on, all are part of an outdated approach to arms control that will soon reach the point of irrelevance. The assumption that there are no realistic alternatives to the status quo is simply wrong.

Ongoing efforts by some Canadian officials to convince Washington that American security requires the American public to remain vulnerable to nuclear annihilation is not only outdated but patronizing and insulting. Proponents of the multilateral NACD regime continue to assert, however, that their approach may not be 'sufficient' to achieve every non-proliferation and arms control objective but it is a 'necessary' component of any comprehensive strategy to disarm the planet. This begs the obvious question - what are the other 'necessary' components for success and where exactly do unilateral strategies fit in? More importantly, what criteria should we use to evaluate the success and failure of competing policies? Assuming that all of this information is essential for making definitive claims about 'necessity' and

28 Keith B. Payne, 'Proliferation, deterrence, stability and missile defence,' *Comparative Strategy* 13 (January 1994); Lewis A. Dunn, 'Deterring the new nuclear powers,' *Washington Quarterly* 17 (winter 1994); Richard K. Betts, 'The concept of deterrence in the postwar era,' *Security Studies* 1 (autumn 1991).

29 Sam Nunn and Bruce Blair, 'From nuclear deterrence to mutual safety,' *Washington Post*, 30 June 1997, 22.

30 Keith Payne, 'Rational requirements.'

'sufficiency,' the following explores the question of success/failure in more detail.

The main challenge for Canada and other proponents of the NACD regime is the lack of demonstrable proof that multilateral arms control works. As a regime with a very specific and straightforward set of objectives, it has never achieved the kind of success that would warrant giving its proponents the moral or intellectual authority to dismiss unilateral alternatives, such as BMD.³¹ Without such evidence there is no logical, empirical, legal, moral, or policy-relevant foundation for embracing multilateral arms control exclusively. Several additional points related to measuring the success and failure of the NACD regime should be noted.

First, ongoing disagreements over appropriate criteria for measuring success and failure preclude definitive statements about the real (and relevant) contributions of the NACD regime. For instance, should we rejoice in the success of indefinite renewal of the NPT or remain highly sceptical of the treaty's capacity to prevent signatories (including, but not limited to, China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Iraq, Syria, and Libya) from acquiring and/or selling prohibited WMD technology? Should we focus on the portion of any draft arms control treaty that achieves consensus or the portion that remains contested because of a combination of insurmountable political, financial, or military hurdles? Consider, for example, how much of the 450 pages of text in the most recent draft of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remain highlighted and bracketed - that is, contested. Should we focus on the minutia of pre-negotiation concessions on the location and timing of the next conference, chairmanship, conference schedules, and so on, or should we acknowledge that the combined efforts of those involved in virtually thousands of similar conferences have failed to stop WMD and ballistic missile technologies from proliferating to states that want them? Examples of NACD successes typically highlight less significant accomplishments in the area of 'process' rather than 'outcome' or minor revisions to the text of draft treaties because these 'successes' are far easier to identify. But this approach simply lowers the bar for measuring progress - indeed, the evaluative criteria for the NACD regime is

31 In fact, the only example of real progress on nuclear disarmament in the last half century was a product of unilateral moves by the Bush administration to exchange the US withdrawal from the ABM treaty for deep cuts in nuclear forces to between 1700-2200.

increasingly removed from straightforward questions about whether WMD technology continues to proliferate and how we can prevent it.³²

Second, proponents of multilateralism are quick to offer as clear 'evidence' of success a long list of multilateral treaties, protocols, agreements, and conventions; nuclear weapon-free zones; hundreds of multilateral declarations, verification programmes, monitoring agreements, protocols, export control guidelines and clarifications/modifications/amendments, and other memoranda of understanding. In addition, multilateralists are likely to list as illustrations of progress hundreds of governmental and non-governmental institutions, organizations, conferences, annual meetings, boards, and agencies with arms control, verification, and monitoring mandates; hundreds of United Nations resolutions and legal opinions designed to address proliferation; hundreds of independent departments, intelligence agencies, and legislative committees established by Western governments (with billions of dollars invested world-wide) to solve one or another part of the proliferation puzzle; and virtually thousands of non-governmental organizations and think-tanks with the same mandate receiving hundreds of millions of dollars in public and private funds. All of this activity is held up as concrete evidence of what four decades of multilateral arms control and disarmament activity has accomplished - incontrovertible evidence that multilateralism is alive and well.³³

But evidence that multilateralism is rampant and spreading does not, in any way, constitute proof of successful multilateralism. Notwithstanding all of this activity, there is no demonstrable proof that we have dealt effectively with the proliferation problem or that the planet is any safer today than it was before we engaged in all of this activity. Indeed, nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons (and their delivery vehicles) continue to proliferate and pose a more significant global threat today than ever before.³⁴

32 On the 'utter bankruptcy' of multilateral arms control, see Charles Krauthammer, 'The real new world order: the American and the Islamic challenge,' *Weekly Standard* 7(12 November 2001).

33 Many of the most important arms control treaties are bilateral, not multilateral, agreements. For example, the Strategic Offensive Reductions treaty; ABM treaty; Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I and II); START I, II, III, and IV; Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

34 For a summary of evidence compiled through public access web pages on the nature and extent of WMD proliferation threats, see the WMD proliferation table compiled by Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Halifax, Nova Scotia, available at <http://is.dal.ca/~centre/nmdchart.pdf>.

Third, proponents of multilateralism rarely acknowledge the double standards they apply when they demand objective and verifiable evidence that unilateralism actually works. The criteria they recommend when assessing BMD success/failure (that is, financial costs, security risks, political and technological impediments, and so on) are never applied with equal vigour when evaluating NACD's accomplishments. If a single BMD interceptor fails to hit its target, critics are quick to cite this as undeniable proof that the technology is unworkable and that the approach (unilateralism) should be rejected. Yet if the same standards are applied to the NACD regime, what would we conclude about the thousands of accumulated failures to 'intercept' WMD technologies from spreading to states who want them? Now, consider these accumulated failures in the context of the billions of dollars, pounds, francs, and yen spent over forty years (by hundreds of states, international institutions, and non-government organizations) to prevent horizontal and vertical proliferation. Our collective inability to prevent North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons constitutes a far more significant and profoundly disturbing failure than BMD interceptors missing their targets.

Unlike the NACD regime, BMD can be assessed in straightforward and easily verifiable terms - do the interceptors work? How often? And can we reasonably expect to overcome existing technological hurdles with a sufficiently high degree of success to warrant deployment? Using any reasonable criteria for measuring success, the BMD programme makes a far less ambiguous contribution to US and Canadian security than the NACD regime simply because we can actually see successes and failures. While no policy initiative will ever make an entirely 'unambiguous' contribution to security, some programmes are easier than others to evaluate. With this in mind, the current rate of success for fully integrated BMD tests from 1999-2002 is five successes out of seven, or roughly 72 per cent. Using any reasonable measure of proliferation (vertical or horizontal), the NACD has done much worse, notwithstanding the typical arguments put forward to defend its record. Moreover, BMD's current success rate of 72 per cent is impressive considering the alternative - a zero per cent probability of stopping any incoming missile if BMD is not deployed. The US can reasonably expect to overcome BMD's existing technological hurdles with a sufficiently high degree of success to warrant the investment of a mere two per cent of the US defence budget (or 0.3 per cent of the US federal budget). In

contrast, consider the diminishing probability (and increasing risks and costs) of dismantling (by constructive engagement or force) North Korea's nuclear programme.

Fourth, to make a much stronger case for the NACD regime its proponents must do more than highlight the costs, risks, and technological impediments of BMD - that tactic will never be sufficient. More compelling evidence is required to demonstrate that multilateral arms control actually works. However, the evidence demonstrates that when it comes to preventing WMD proliferation, the NACD's 'successes' will never be as positive (or constructive) as its 'failures' are negative. Multilateralists will no doubt respond to this assertion with a list of ways in which their approach can be made to work more effectively. But they must also demonstrate that proposed solutions are realistic, cost effective, less risky, more technologically feasible, and more likely to produce a greater return in security than corresponding solutions to BMD's deficiencies. Proponents of multilateralism have spent almost no time developing this case, for obvious reasons - the impediments to multilateral success are far more significant, more fundamental, more entrenched in domestic and international politics and, therefore, less resolvable than any technological, financial, or security hurdles associated with BMD success (including overcoming worries about Russian and Chinese responses).

The purpose here is not to indict the multilateral NACD regime for its failures, but to recommend opening up the space for alternatives that typically get dismissed by proponents of multilateral arms control. Unless the regime can demonstrate success, unilateral approaches like BMD will continue to be perceived as absolutely essential.

An almost religious commitment to multilateralism has emerged as the only game in town for Canada. But officials in Ottawa should not assume that the priorities Canada is forced to accept by virtue of its declining position in the world are the only priorities and that they should be imposed on the rest of the world. The unintended consequence to Canada of maintaining an almost blind subservience to multilateralism is that all other approaches are dismissed, not because they are less legitimate, or because they provide less security for Canadians, but because they marginalize Canada and Canadian officials. But in a post 11 September environment Canada's fading status in the world is the last thing the United State should (and will) care about.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's decision in May 2003 to begin formal discussions with the Americans on ballistic missile defence is an encouraging sign - critics within the NACD community appear to have lost the battle to keep Canada out of these important negotiations. Ironically, if they succeeded it would have stripped from the Canadian government a significant opportunity to live up to one of its most important obligations - to protect Canadians from emerging threats associated with WMD proliferation. Fortunately for Canada, the US would have been more than happy to fulfil that obligation on Ottawa's behalf.