

leaders will find it difficult to follow Washington's lead. If that happens, the ultimate costs of the Iraq war will be far more devastating and long-lasting than we currently anticipate. ▀

Reinvigorate Nuclear Nonproliferation

Jessica Tuchman Mathews

The Iraq war's monopoly on America's political energy has now stretched to five years. During what is an eon in a time of fast-moving global change, a number of international security problems have grown, from neglect, into full-blown crises. Unless a major effort is made to reverse current trends, the fissures now spreading across the global nonproliferation regime could easily become the worst of these crises and among the greatest of the war's long-term costs.

Of all the challenges we face, only nuclear weapons pose an existential threat to the United States. Because it is far and away the world's largest conventional military power, the United States would suffer the greatest relative loss in a world of 20 or 30 or more states possessing the "great leveler." And while deterrence still works against states, it does not apply to terrorists with neither populations nor territory to protect. That's why it is imperative for the United States to rescue and then rejuvenate the nonproliferation regime. It is critical to our security interests in the Middle East, a region in which a nuclear arms race could be fatally destabilizing, and throughout the world.

The nonproliferation regime is a massive body of rules, institutions, and trade and technology controls, built around the central pillar of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Now 40 years old, the NPT has kept the number of nuclear states far lower than its authors dared hope. Since the 1960s, many more nations have given up nuclear weapons programs than have started them. There are fewer nuclear weapons in the world today, and fewer nations with nuclear weapons programs, than there were 20 years ago. In 1995, a quarter-century of progress under the treaty was capped by an agreement to transform it from a 25-year commitment to an open-ended one.

The subsequent years were very bad ones, however. In 1998, India and Pakistan each set off a series of nuclear explosions. Though the two were not treaty members, the regime had failed to prevent countries that had fought three wars in rapid succession from crossing the nuclear threshold. Later, the events of

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September 11, 2001, awoke the world to the immense threat from technically sophisticated terrorists. In 2003, another non-state threat appeared, this time from a commercial group. A network headed by Pakistan's A.Q. Khan, involving scientists and businessmen from a dozen countries, had for years been selling nuclear bomb designs and equipment to all comers.

The 1990s also brought to light covert programs in Iraq and North Korea, and a few years later in Iran. Each country used the cover of a legal, civilian nuclear program to pursue an illegal weapons program. These programs revealed an Achilles' heel in the international rules. They showed that no safeguards can provide real protection when a country has direct access to bomb fuel—either through enrichment technology that can produce highly enriched uranium or reprocessing technology, which produces plutonium.

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For the past six years, the Bush Administration has not only been fixated on Iraq but it has set a course of ending the United States' traditional leadership in the pursuit of arms control. Its 2002 National Security Strategy argued that the proliferation threat comes from the nexus of a small number of outlaw states, nuclear weapons, and terrorists. This new formulation

attracted little attention at the time. Most of those who did notice believed it was designed solely to support the case for war in Iraq. But it was not. It was a radical change—and the core of a new nonproliferation strategy. Whereas all previous presidents had focused on the weapons, Bush focused on the regimes that have or seek them. From there it is a natural, short step to regime change—rather than arms control—as the means to control the threat.

Pursuit of regime change led to the catastrophe in Iraq and years of indecision while nuclear programs proceeded in North Korea and Iran. In the latter two cases not even the most ardent supporters of regime change could come up with a promising plan, but the lingering desire to somehow find a military option blocked meaningful diplomatic effort.

During this period, the NPT's nuclear weapons members—Russia, Great Britain, France, China, and the United States—continued to observe a moratorium on nuclear testing, and they undertook some real reductions in their nuclear arsenals. Yet as the years after the end of the Cold War rolled by without more significant reductions, the conviction grew among nonnuclear states that the weapons states never intended to uphold their end of the NPT bargain. The

treaty was an explicit tradeoff: Nonnuclear states renounced nuclear weapons forever in exchange for a pledge of nuclear disarmament by the nuclear states. The Bush Administration's decision to shelve the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, for which the United States had fought for decades, and its determination to develop new nuclear bomb designs were steps the rest of the world saw as directly and aggressively opposed to that explicit treaty commitment.

This disenchantment grew just as it was realized that the treaty needed to be substantially *strengthened* if it was to succeed: strengthened to impose meaningful costs on states that used it as a cover for illegal weapons programs; strengthened to eliminate direct access to bomb fuel in nonnuclear weapons states; and strengthened to address the unanticipated threats from terrorists and corporate networks. The nonnuclear states' willingness even to consider such steps evaporated in the face of what many saw as nonperformance by the nuclear states.

The urgent U.S. nonproliferation agenda, then, is first to rescue, and then repair, the global regime. This is not to say that the nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran need not be addressed. Failure to reverse the weapons programs in either one would in all likelihood fatally undermine the regime. But racing from one national crisis to the next is not enough. It is a course that leads to nothing but stopgap measures—and more crises. The underlying regime itself is the most critical patient.

Before it can hope to lead, Washington first needs to reestablish its own credentials. Ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and cancelation of new nuclear weapons programs are the essential steps and are entirely within our own choosing. Doing so will not alter North Korea's thinking, or Iran's, or that of would-be emulators, but it will help to isolate these states and make it possible for a united international community to take effective action against them.

Reestablishing arms control momentum with Russia is another priority to change the way nonnuclear states now see the NPT bargain. Key steps include extending provisions of the START I Treaty, which will expire in 2009, and taking the long overdue step of lowering the alert status of strategic nuclear weapons so as to reduce the risk of accidental launch. Unfortunately, the Bush Administration's decision to base an antimissile system in Poland and the Czech Republic derails any hope for progress in this direction for the time being. Pushing ahead with a system that does not yet work, against a threat from Iran that does not yet exist, and at the expense of relations with a state, Russia, whose participation is essential if the threat is to be prevented, is a choice that can only be labeled incomprehensible.

Once it is again in a position to lead on this issue, the United States must make strengthening the nonproliferation regime a top foreign policy priority. Critical

steps include the completion of an international agreement to halt the production of fissile material for weapons use and—even harder—a new bargain to prevent construction of enrichment and reprocessing plants in nonnuclear states where they do not now exist. This will entail finding a way to provide an ironclad guarantee of what are called nuclear fuel services—the provision of fresh reactor fuel and handling of the radioactive wastes—to all nonnuclear NPT member states in good standing, at some significant discount from the market price.

All of this is an enormous diplomatic challenge. Beyond it lies an even greater one. Forty years ago, when the five original weapons states signed the NPT, they affirmed that nuclear disarmament is desirable. The question that has never been asked, though, is whether it is feasible. With its thousands of government engineers and analysts, the United States has not a single individual whose job is to analyze any of the dozens of highly technical and politically complex issues that underlie an answer. When its human resources, and those of the other nuclear states, are deployed to this momentous research agenda, the international community may finally be in a position to start to complete the extraordinary task it set itself to in 1968. ▀

Pursue a New Freedom Agenda

Larry Diamond

The fundamental challenge that will confront the United States after a troop drawdown in Iraq will be the same one that prompted many to clamor for the invasion in the first place: defusing the threat of radical Islamist terrorism and the unjust, undemocratic governance in the region that feeds it. The Arab and Islamic worlds—with their great heritage of civilizations—are falling further behind the rest of the world, a fact increasingly apparent in an era of globalization. Genuine development that lifts these countries fully into prosperity, dignity, and the modern world will require far-reaching reform of governance, restraint of power, rule of law, and inclusive political participation. If the result will not always be democracy as we know it in the West, it will need to approach it and amount to something more than the cynical, tactical game of liberalization that Arab states like Egypt and Jordan have been cycling through for two generations.

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