

# The Question of Disarmament and the Enforcement Paradox

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December 6, 2011

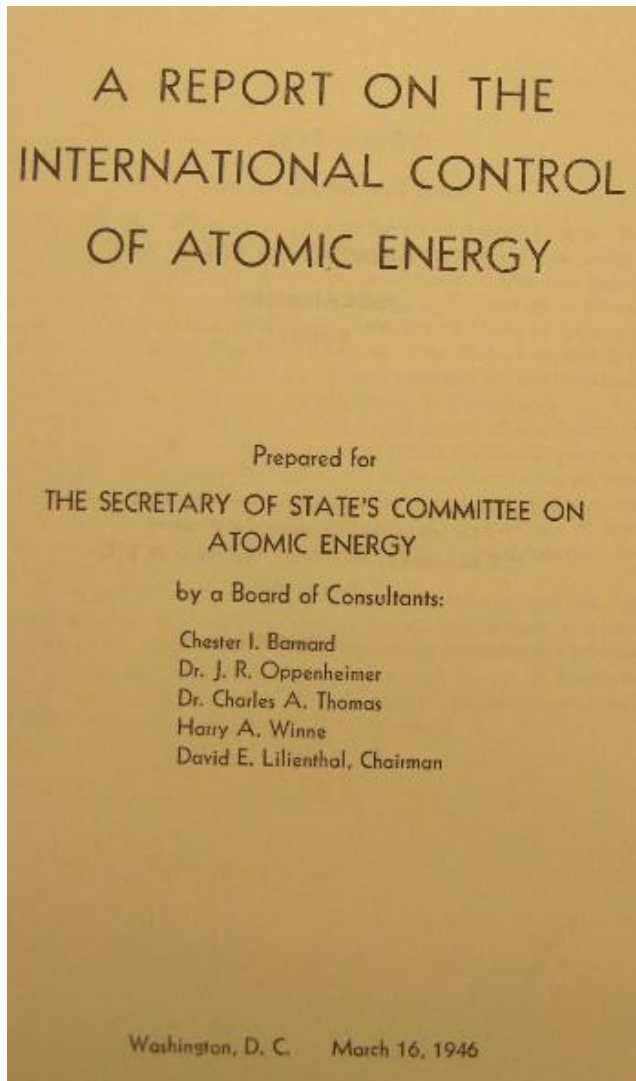
# The Benefits of Disarmament

- Nuclear disarmament will reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism.
- Nuclear disarmament will reduce proliferation pressures and make it easier to build international political support for measures to prevent nuclear proliferation.
- Nuclear disarmament will reduce the risk of nuclear war.

# Early Observations

- What strategic threats are likely to exist at or around “nuclear zero?”
- Fear of a nuclear surprise attack motivated efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons at the beginning of the nuclear age.
- The threat of a surprise attack plays an important role in nuclear deterrence theory.
- Emphasis on disarmament as a solution to this particular military threat points to a new disarmament framework

# Acheson-Lilienthal Report



- **Acheson-Lilienthal Report, 1946:** “Once the plan is fully in operation it will afford a great measure of security against surprise attack.”
- **David Lilienthal, September 1946:** “Some people have objected to our proposal because it doesn’t guarantee an end to war. That’s valid criticism, for what we set out to do was to find a way to prevent the surprise use of atomic weapons.”

# Special Committee on Disarmament Study

5-26-55  
**EYES ONLY**

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T.S. Control No. 45-D

Copy No. 26

**VOLUME I**

PROGRESS REPORT

PROPOSED POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES

on the

QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT



DECLASSIFIED  
AUTHORITY: AR 94-41, \*1  
FRL-1455-57  
By: T3 NLE Date: 4/11/97

**EYES ONLY**

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Special Staff Study  
for the President  
NSC Action No. 1328

***CARDINAL AIM** } To prevent the U.S.S.R. Capability of effectively  
**OF U.S. POLICY** } Destroying U.S. through Surprise Attack*

## **METHODS OF ACHIEVING U.S. AIM**

- ① *Voluntary Unilateral Decision by the U.S.S.R.*
- ② *Enforced Unilateral Action on the U.S.S.R.  
through an Ultimatum or Use of External Force*
- ③ *Multilateral Effective Agreement with U.S.S.R.  
to Limit Arms.*

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# Which Disarmament “Vision” Best Manages the Threat of a Surprise Attack?

- **Weaponless deterrence** (Jonathan Schell, Christopher Ford)
  - “How precisely one might ensure ... survivability [of a latent nuclear capability], however, is somewhat less clear (Christopher Ford 2011).”
- **Advanced conventional deterrence** (Reagan Administration, 2001 Nuclear Posture Review)
  - Moving out from the nuclear umbrella ... forces us to rely much more heavily on conventional weapons (George Keyworth 1984).”
- **Strategic disarmament**
  - This framework acknowledges that disarmament must not increase the risk of a surprise attack.

# Implications of Strategic Disarmament

- Military strategies, not particular weapon systems, are identified as destabilizing.
  - Weapons favoring surprise attack strategies should be the target of reductions and/or eventual elimination.
- Strategic disarmament reduces incentives to cheat in a nuclear weapons-free world.
  - “The lesson of Pearl Harbor is clear. To strike a heavy but indecisive blow at a powerful enemy, without possessing the resources to follow it up by invasion and occupation of the homeland, is to court ultimate disaster.” (Blackett 1948)
- Strategic disarmament creates its own problem—an “enforcement paradox.”
  - The reductions in conventional forces required to reduce the threat of surprise attack will also eliminate the weapons systems required to enforce a world without nuclear weapons.

# Support for this Disarmament Vision...

*Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons* (UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2009)

- “Complete balance in conventional forces is unlikely to be attainable. But complex, multi-faceted conventional arms control arrangements and confidence building measures may be necessary to underpin a ban on nuclear weapons.”

*Pierre Sellal, Secretary General of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (February 2010)

- “If we don’t complement nuclear disarmament with credible disarmament in all other fields (whether biological, chemical or conventional, missile defense and space), it might lead again to a destabilizing scenario of arms race.”



# Key Conclusions

- Fear of a nuclear surprise attack has played a bigger role in thinking about disarmament than advocates and critics realize.
- Eliminating nuclear weapons will *heighten* the risk of surprise attack and increase the value of non-nuclear capabilities.
- Reductions in conventional forces are likely required to manage these problems.
- Unfortunately, these reductions eliminate the capabilities required to enforce a world without nuclear weapons, creating an “enforcement paradox.”
- “Strategic disarmament” highlights how achieving a world without nuclear weapons is the responsibility of both nuclear and non-nuclear states, further complicating the challenge of achieving a nuclear-free world.