

# FOREWORD

*George P. Shultz*

As he watched the world's reactions to the first atomic explosions, Albert Einstein wearily remarked that "everything has changed except our way of thinking." I quoted that remark in my Foreword to an earlier book by Sid Drell and Jim Goodby, *The Gravest Danger*, published in 2003. "He was right for a time," I wrote in that Foreword. My view was that, up to that time, nuclear deterrence had served us well for half a century or so.

But there were unintended consequences. After the attempts to eliminate atomic bombs failed in the United Nations, the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in a competition that led to tens of thousands of nuclear weapons and thermonuclear weapons on each side. Britain, France, and China became recognized nuclear weapons states. The world's aggregate holdings of nuclear weapons finally began to decline after 1986, four decades after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It happened largely because two men—Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev—recognized the truth of what Einstein had said. Together, these two leaders wrenched the world away from the path it had been on.

Their work together helped to end the Cold War. Treaties they sponsored and negotiations they guided led to the com-

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plete elimination of one class of nuclear weapons systems and to a sharp reduction in others. The START treaty they initiated and their successors completed is still in effect and provides the basic verification system for the current nuclear restraint regime. At this writing, it appears that it will be the basis for the next strategic nuclear reductions treaty that President Obama and President Medvedev have promised to negotiate this year.

Despite this record of accomplishment, I have concluded that Einstein is still right. Thinking about nuclear weapons and how humanity should respond to them has not changed very much. Traditional calculations about security are prevalent in decision-making centers around the world. There is a tendency to think that advantages for one country translate into disadvantages for its rivals and vice versa. The experiences of warfare in the pre-nuclear world taught them that. But in the nuclear era, the destructive potential of these weapons is so immense that dogmas of the past no longer hold. President Reagan's instincts about nuclear weapons led him to remark that these are "totally irrational, totally inhumane, and good for nothing but killing, and possibly destructive of life on earth." In this era, all nations can be winners if they work successfully for a world without nuclear weapons. And all will be losers if they fail. Two conferences held at the Hoover Institution in 2006 and 2007 essentially ratified that point of view. Four books published previously by the Hoover Press, in a series of which this is a part, have reinforced that view through solid analysis.

President Obama is committed to work for a world free of nuclear weapons, understanding that a long-range goal like this is needed as a guide to current decision making. He has identified the early steps that will take us in the direction we need to go, recognizing that achieving these individual steps will show that the vision has a reality to it. And the president also

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has stressed that the United States will be sure to have a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal so long as nuclear weapons exist. I support these policies enthusiastically and so do those who have joined with me in advocating policies like these.

Many world leaders have joined citizens in every walk of life in applauding this renewal of Ronald Reagan's vision of a world without nuclear weapons. But the old ideas are hard to shake off. The threat to use nuclear weapons against another nation is still perceived by many as the ace in the hole—the card that will bring victory at the end of the day. Reagan and Gorbachev saw things differently. They said, “A nuclear war cannot be won and it must never be fought.” There are those who argue that the United States should not want to get rid of nuclear weapons even if everyone else in the world was willing. President Obama addressed this when he spoke in Prague on April 5, 2009: “We know where that road leads . . . we know the path when we choose fear over hope.”

Nuclear deterrence in the form it continues to have today no longer serves the nation's interest in the way it did during the Cold War. Even with a relatively stable bipolar world, we came perilously close to nuclear war, specifically in the case of the Cuban missile crisis. Nuclear technologies and the knowledge of how to build an atom bomb have spread around the globe. Many nations with modest economic and industrial means now have within their reach the ability to do what the United States did in its Manhattan Project during World War II. In a world with many nuclear weapons states, deterrence will not work as it did in the Cold War. Cyber warfare can greatly complicate nuclear crisis control. Terrorist attacks have no return address. The fact is nuclear deterrence is increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective. We have to change our way of thinking about it. This book offers ideas about that, including ways of stretching out time for decision making dur-

ing a nuclear crisis and relying increasingly on an ability to reconstitute nuclear forces as a safer form of nuclear deterrence.

There are those who think of nuclear weapons as a useful tool in the struggle against proliferation because it discourages allies of a nuclear power from embarking on nuclear weapons programs of their own. Japan, the first and only victim of a nuclear attack, is held up as the prime example of this, despite the Japanese government's consistent record of supporting nuclear disarmament. Japan, like other nations, would be far more secure in a world where nuclear arsenals are being phased out. Nuclear deterrence as we have known it in the past always carries with it the risk that it could fail. The consequences of that would be so cataclysmic that we all should want to find a better way to protect the things we value. What this argument really shows is how difficult it is for many people to imagine a world without nuclear weapons.

Next year, there will be an international review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the bedrock of the nuclear restraint regime since the early 1970s. It is clear that the bargain struck in that treaty must be dramatically reaffirmed if the treaty is to survive as a meaningful guide to national decision making around the world. That bargain called for serious efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. Although the United States and Russia have moved in the right direction, we still have a long way to go to convince our partners that we really mean it when we talk about ridding the world of nuclear weapons. President Obama's commitment to this goal should make a big difference but he cannot achieve miracles. The U.S. Congress, American citizens, and their counterparts in other nations have to get behind this idea. This educational and thought-provoking book contributes information and ideas that help illuminate this vital issue. Now and again, there are glimmers of hope that Einstein's observation finally will become invalid. Let's hope this is one of those times.