

**US Representative Dennis J. Kucinich (D-OH)
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"April 24, 2010: Our Nuclear Future"
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Peace Through Nuclear Disarmament

I remember the "duck and cover" drills. I remember as a school child in the '50's, being alerted that the missiles were on their way. In my youthful mind's eye I could see the slow motion arc as the missile came towards my neighborhood, my home, my school. We were told to crouch down, under our desks, to put our heads deep in our laps, and, whatever happened, "Children, keep your eyes closed, don't look up! Or you'll be blinded by the flash."

The drills were always quite orderly and they gave us reason to hope, no, believe, that once the flash occurred, that somehow everything would be okay; and that we could have recess and lunch that same day and keep our plans to play after school

Today we are again confronted with fantasies of surviving a nuclear war. We are as children told to crouch underneath a shield of a national missile defense system, and not to open our eyes and somehow, with enough counter missiles, with enough shovels, with warm clothes for a nuclear winter, we will find a way to survive, to go out and play after our lessons. Of course, we know better. We have learned that we are not victims of the world we see. But we can become victims of the way we see the world.

After more than three decades of pain-staking work towards nuclear non-proliferation, we can still envision a world where total nuclear disarmament is a possibility. But in order to push back the nuclear sword of Damocles which still hangs over the world, we have much work to do. We need to convince the nuclear nations to disarm. We need to discourage non-nuclear nations from arming. Indeed, that is the basis of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) under review at the United Nations this week.

We understand that arms agreements exist in a fragile ecology, within an architecture of mutual trust which recognizes that all nations of this world are interdependent and rely on a common global habitat. It is mutual trust which has replaced mutual assured destruction and which has made nuclear non-proliferation the ultimate human rights cause, because we recognize that the world must do away with nuclear weapons before nuclear weapons do away with the world.

In this season of hope, when hundreds of millions of people celebrate physical survival and spiritual redemption we have seen signs of wonder from Russia: A

serious effort to limit strategic nuclear arms. And a serious effort to ban the testing of nuclear devices. If we can, for a moment, view the world as an undivided whole, we can and should celebrate anytime a major nuclear power takes steps back from the abyss of a nuclear arms build-up, of testing, of nuclear saber-rattling. If we view the world as an undivided whole we can sense that there exists a moment in time for the United States to seize the initiative for accelerated arms reductions, so that the people of all nations may take comfort.

Yet as the Atlas of global human consciousness holds up the world peacefully, there are those who pretend Atlas can take away attention from global peace for a moment to indulge in a bit of nuclear chess:

- So the U.S. Senate makes a move to block a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- So the Administration moves to advance the notion of a national missile defense
- And the Administration moves to amend the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, to permit a National Missile Defense (NMD) system.
- So the Administration communicates to the Russians, even as the Russians have agreed to arms reductions and test bans, that it is prepared to move to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, if necessary, to achieve a national missile defense system.

These moves, as in chess, have in the past been viewed as part of the gamesmanship of treaty-making, but with a significant note of caution. One author, commented on such gamesmanship in connection with the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks:

Only up to a point, however, does SALT lend itself to comparisons to chess or poker or any other game. The defect of any such analogy is that in these games, the object is victory. A chess player is trying to checkmate his opponent, a poker player to win the whole pot -- a warrior to defeat his enemy. In SALT, however, the object has not been for one player to beat the other. While taking some pawns along the way perhaps limiting the freedom of movement of the other's queen, neither side has sought to check the other's king -- that is to imperil its self-perceived vital national interest. To play to win would be to seek 'unilateral advantage' or 'strategic superiority.' It would be to violate the rules of parity and stability. In SALT the object of the game is a draw. (Endgame, pages 17-18)

The author, then a diplomatic correspondent for Time magazine, wrote this observation 21 years ago, in a book entitled Endgame. He is now United States Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, and is currently involved in delivering to the Russians the message that they must agree to changes in the ABM Treaty

to permit a US national missile defense system (or the United States will unilaterally pull out of the ABM Treaty so it is able to build a national missile defense system anyway!)

Will the NMD system violate the rules of parity and stability? A careful reading of the ABM Treaty would suggest that is the case. The NMD violates the central principle of the ABM Treaty, which is a ban on the deployment of strategic missile defenses.

Deployment of the NMD will decouple all arms agreements. It will undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It will negate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It will frustrate SALT II and SALT III. It will lead directly to proliferation by the nuclear nations. It will lead to transitions toward nuclear arms by the non-nuclear nations. It will make the world less safe. It will lead to the impoverishment of the people of many nations as budgets are re-fashioned for nuclear arms expenditures. That the United States would be willing to risk a showdown with Russia or China and the rest of the world over the unlikely possibility that North Korea may one day have a missile which can touch the continental United States -- argues for talks with North Korea, not the beginning of a new world-wide arms race.

The ABM Treaty has been an essential element of nuclear deterrence. By providing for a ban on nationwide defenses, by keeping treaty signatories from rapidly deploying such technology and by preventing circumvention of the treaty, the ABM Treaty has worked. It has made the world safer. No change to the ABM Treaty is minor, if it changes any provision which discourages defensive missile systems -- which could invite counter-measures around the globe. [For an excellent discussion on these points see Gronlund and Lewis' analysis in the November 1999 issue of *Arms Control Today: How a Limited National Missile Defense Would Impact the ABM Treaty.*]

The debate becomes tragicomic when one understands that the technology, however undesirable, doesn't even work! The 'Star Wars' missile defense proposal (known as the Strategic Defense Initiative, SDI) in the 1980's was well understood by its most ardent advocates to be a welfare program for nuclear research labs and defense contractors. This was illustrated by author Robert Scheer in his 1988 book *Thinking Tuna Fish, Talking Death*, when he quotes a physicist, who, as deputy director of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, expressed doubts about whether a program could be stopped once it was started:

"Once a certain amount of money is committed, even if the weapons makes no sense, it's not going to be easy to change course. What's happening now is that all of the industries and many scientists are being brought into this, and that creates a constituency of support that, up the road, becomes impossible to turn off." (Chapter: *The Shambles of Star Wars*, page 350)

The case has been made that the NMD cannot work. It is a fantastic technological boondoggle dream. And it can easily be defeated with

countermeasures, such as decoys or underflying the radar. Yet the case must be made again and again why the *talk* about NMD program is destructive of nuclear non-proliferation and all treaties which support non-proliferation.

These principles support the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):

- Stop the spread of nuclear weapons.
- Facilitate international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear technology.
- Encourage arms control talks.

All are essential to peace in the world. International cooperation leads to peace. Heading off regional arms races leads to peace. De-emphasizing nuclear arms as an emblem of national honor permits peace to evolve. Thus, the NPT is a corner stone of international security.

Keep in mind that human history is not something which "just happens." We created and used the atomic bomb. We crafted non-proliferation treaties. We are co-creators of our own destiny. We can choose to cower in fear, protected in our imaginations by the instrumentalities of violence, both offensive and defensive -- or we can take this nation which we have inherited and make it into something which we will be proud to turn over to our children, as part of a secure global environment for all children.

The United States, as one of the foremost signatories to the NPT on July 1, 1968, has a singular responsibility here. It is our nation which must again lead the way towards strengthening the framework for global peace and global survival. We can do it through affirming our commitment to NPT, to the ABM Treaty, to arms reductions and to the eventual elimination of nuclear arms from the face of the planet. It is our nation which must keep the moral authority to lead the way towards total nuclear disarmament around the globe.

It may require that we change the way we look at matters of war and peace. This is what is envisioned in the creation of a Department of Peace in which non-violent resolution of conflict would serve as an organizing principle of a new, executive-level department for the purposes of domestic as well as international policy. (See www.house.gov/kucinich)

We must believe that peace, not war, is inevitable. We should not expect our children to forfeit their tender years in futile "duck and cover" drills done in fear of the Bomb. Nor should we expect our children to learn to love the Bomb. Or to respect a government which harbors the Bomb. We must teach our children by example that we have the vision and the courage to love each other, past our differences in ideologies, past our differences in race, color, creed or economic status. We must teach them to love themselves and to love the world. For the world needs love, compassion, common sense and peace.