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INTRODUCTION

There are, of course, many disparate views of arms control, its central purposes and utility, and how it can best be related to the preservation of national security and of world peace. Some view arms as evil things-in-themselves, and grudgingly accept arms limitations as an unavoidable compromise in the direction of general disarmament. Others view arms control as a trial arena for the development of a global law of nations, a step towards a world government that its proponents see as the only solution to the conflict that must eventually erupt on a Hobbesian model. Still others view arms control as an extension of military security policy -- an alternative method of calibrating the distribution of means of forceful compellence and deterrence in the world system; credibly verifiable bargains, even with one's adversaries are viewed as cheaper and more reliable than depending on the dynamics of competition in the building of weapons systems.

A recent article by Hedley Bull, in INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, highlights the paradoxes inherent in these concepts of arms control. He also stresses that bargains among superpowers, however effective they may eventually be in preventing superwar, almost inevitably fortify assumptions about the adequacy of the status quo ante as the given of the distribution of power in the world. Inherent in any system of power stabilization is the hindrance to significant change in power relationships and in that sense, arms control among the superpowers may be viewed as succeeding at the expense of smaller powers. (Bull does not stress the historical reality that in a less stabilized context, the great powers simply consumed what they wished of the resources of the inferior ones.)

Another argument for arms control stresses the PROCESS of negotiation. It may be alleged that one virtue of SALT was the talk, namely a protracted process of mutual education, whereby competing powers could gain a clearer insight into the legitimate security needs of the other, and adopt more nearly convergent world models of a mutually acceptable security framework. This education also extends to the elites at home, who are obliged to come to grips with the opportunities presented by offers of mutual limitation that might never be presented in so compelling a way by any other route. One is perhaps led to seek such secondary virtues in light of the fact that the quantitative "limitations" of SALT have led, at best to an acceleration of qualitative advances in weapons technology, and at worst to the establishment of what amounts to a floor as well as

ceiling on strategic arms levels that can hardly be called a severe restraint. The assertion of a convergent model it must be noted is under attack by those who make just the opposite argument: that Soviet doctrine in fact is directed to the development of a nuclear war-fighting capability. We have very limited analytical tools, if any, by which to assess such views; they do highlight the importance of technical national means of verification as the means of sustaining mutual confidence in the reliability of agreements with respect to existing capabilities.

For this reason, one of the alarming "advances" in military technology that might undercut the entire arms control enterprise is the potentiality for warfighting in the space regime, e.g. the directed energy weapons that have been surfaced recently in the open press. Whatever the immediacy of the technical threat to surveillance and communications satellites, the possibility of accidental encounters or malicious interference with these instruments could reopen a mood of suspicion and tension, and incidentally motivate heightened investments for technical competition in that regime. The possibility of war through accident or misunderstanding is so grave that at minimum, the superpowers need to gain what assurance is possible about the intent and capability of the programs already initiated on both sides. President Carter has already indicated the high priority that his administration would give to arms control initiatives for this regime, and is perhaps signalling his intentions to enter a more intense competition in it as an alternative to such agreements. There are many technical as well as political problems in the design of such agreements; and we are further hindered by the secrecy that attends both sides' military capabilities and plans in this sensitive area. It is nevertheless a field that deserves high priority of analytical attention in an effort to find constructive accommodations....by Joshua Lederberg