

risk of miscarriage of justice thus becomes unacceptable, no matter how low the probability of its occurrence, since the product of the finite probability multiplied by the infinite negative utility yields an infinitely negative product.

When this reasoning is applied to accidental nuclear war it follows that no matter how small the probability of such a war, the negative utility of wrongfully executing millions of innocent people makes the risk unacceptable. Rapoport argued, therefore, that nuclear weapons should be abolished on the same basis as capital punishment.

To the abolitionist, the cost of accidental nuclear war is always infinite and the benefits are always zero. However, an assessment of the probability of accidental nuclear war may still serve the abolitionist cause and there is even a possibility that the danger of accidental nuclear war may provide common ground between decision-makers and abolitionists. Rapoport suggested that military planners do not like the idea of accidental war because if war occurs, they want it to happen in the way and at the time which they have designated.

In further comment on the papers Rapoport said that abolitionists can draw attention to the way in which various technologies and policies affect the probability of accidental nuclear war. Leonard and Rosenberg's paper had shown how a launch-on-warning policy magnifies the risk of accidental nuclear war, while Sennott's paper had linked overlapping false alarms to accidental war. Frei had pointed out the difference between the independent and interdependent risk factors in the way they contribute to the risk of accidental nuclear war. While adding independent redundant safeguards to the nuclear system may decrease the probability of nuclear war, the growing complexity of the nuclear system and the consequent unforeseen interdependence of its components may increase the risk.

According to Rapoport the abolitionist would do well to stress the two-sided nature of every risk. Using the analogy of business, where every investment entails a risk but every non-investment entails an opportunity lost, he argued that military planners emphasize the risks of dealing with the Russians but neglect to mention the opportunities lost by not dealing with them:

What if, just *what if* Mr. Gorbachev's proposals for carrying out the abolitionist's programme are *not* a bluff. If they are not, what is the opportunity loss associated with dismissing them? If they are a bluff, what is the risk associated with calling it?