

Lamb stated that Leng's paper had addressed the issue of crisis behaviour most directly, but he suggested that none of the papers had defined precisely the sort of crisis which would most likely lead to accidental nuclear war. Did the greater risk lie in a US-Soviet crisis in Europe or in a US surrogate-Soviet surrogate crisis? Were geographically limited crises inherently less dangerous than widespread ones? In what ways did particular kinds of crises interact with the contemporary command system?

Lamb's major conclusion was that crisis control and crisis prevention, as well as technical measures to enhance command systems and nuclear disarmament, should be dealt with in any study of accidental war. In this area smaller powers could also have a role. Talks on arms transfers should be rejuvenated, and talks on geographical hot spots where a superpower confrontation might arise should be regularized. Finally, Lamb thought it was an attractive idea to make crisis simulation available to top decision-makers.

John Barrett's presentation dealt with Leng and Niezing's papers. He began by admitting his interest in arms control and policy analysis as opposed to events data analysis, of the sort carried out by Leng. He wondered whether findings from historical data could be usefully extrapolated to the present and if US-Soviet nuclear parity would affect Leng's findings. He was particularly interested in Leng's finding that the use of threats as a bargaining strategy by comparably powerful states would result in war.

Barrett found Niezing's focus on perceptions to be fruitful. He thought there might possibly be differences in the cognitive apparatus employed by those holding different views of contemporary nuclear reality. The whole theory of deterrence is based on analyses of risk and cost/benefit, and these should be explicitly explored.

Barrett also appreciated Niezing's focus on perceptions, especially when applied toward presenting advice for disarmament in a palatable form. Here the symbolic as well as the military importance of weapons systems were significant. Arms control experts could offer more credible alternatives if they succeeded in exposing the adverse psychological effects of certain weapons systems quite apart from any questions about their military value. Barrett suggested that workers in the field of arms control would benefit from having many of the academic works presented at the conference translated into more practical terms.