

over the re-emergence of a technology favouring whichever side decides to strike first in a nuclear exchange and the defence of the doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) against its critics. The possibility of a successful first strike had previously been regarded as creating a reciprocal fear of surprise attack in a crisis, while the MAD doctrine had been attacked as immoral and dangerous because based on the assumption that deterrence depended on both superpowers being able to inflict a specified level of damage on their opponent, say 40 million dead, after absorbing the most effective attack their opponent could launch.

With the SALT I agreement still being observed after nearly two years and the SALT II negotiations under way, providing a forum for a continued U.S.-U.S.S.R. discussion of their respective strategic programs and their political implications, it has been difficult to regard increases in the technical possibility of a first strike as making such a strike possible. Nor can the defects of MAD weigh heavily against a doctrine that has provided the basis for Soviet-American acceptance of strategic parity and strategic stability.

Nuclear proliferation

Similarly, proliferation, the acquisition of nuclear weapons by states not already possessing them, has ceased to be a major concern of American foreign policy. Whereas the Kennedy and Johnson administrations saw proliferation as being rapid and destabilizing, a view still shared by Canada, Dr. Kissinger has seen proliferation as being relatively slow and contributing to, rather than detracting from, stability. China's acquisition of nuclear weapons has been accompanied by a more national foreign policy while lessening Chinese fears of a nuclear attack by the United States or Russia. India's probable development of a deterrent in the next decade could be seen as destabilizing only accompanied by grave domestic instability, while further proliferation by Japan has receded into the future, leaving only Israel as a potentially destabilizing proliferator. The French deterrent has, like China's, been transformed by Dr. Kissinger into a stabilizing force, underpinning the U.S. nuclear guarantee of Western Europe along with the British deterrent. Indeed, Dr. Kissinger has sometimes implied that it would be in the U.S. interest to strengthen the British and French deterrents to provide a stronger underpinning of the *status quo* in Western Europe. Hence also his support for a swing back

towards a greater reliance on tactical nuclear weapons to deter a Russian attack on Western Europe, or defeat such an attack if it occurred. The new generation of "clear" tactical weapons being developed could make this strategy, urged by Dr. Kissinger in 1957 (*Nuclear Weapons and American Foreign Policy*), once again credible, while enabling the United States to withdraw some troops from Western Europe, thereby forestalling domestic pressures for total withdrawal.

The role of conventional forces

Partly because of the limitations imposed by nuclear deterrence, and partly through changes in military technology, conventional military forces have become decreasingly useable for political purposes within or outside the central balance, although still used for occasional intervention by the superpowers. Their forces in Europe are much larger than those needed to preserve a *status quo* both must accept, given that any attempt to challenge it could precipitate nuclear war. Hence the current negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The superpower deletion of the requirement that MFR be balanced signified that they were likely to agree on equal quantitative reductions, thereby increasing the Soviet Union's politically unuseable conventional superiority versus NATO. Outside Europe, the increasing costs of superpower intervention with conventional forces have been accompanied by a sharp decline in the benefits of intervention, a change exemplified by the U.S. experience in Indochina from 1963 to 1973. Only a major power prepared, like Russia in Eastern Europe, to take over the running of a country on classical imperialist lines would be likely to gain from intervention in the 1970s.

Thus agreement between the superpowers on rules governing their use of force and the management of crises has been facilitated by the inherent limitations of the forces at their disposal, as well as by their recognition of the need to avoid a confrontation where a conflict over limited gains could expand or escalate, threatening the more valuable, central understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. The recent Arab-Israeli conflict demonstrated that the U.S. notion of what constitute the rules of crisis-management in a given political context may not be shared by the U.S.S.R., since the Russian resupply of the Arab states during a limited war broke what the United States considered as an important restraint on

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