

Nuclear Diplomacy in the Age of Social Media

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In 1945 the atomic fire was lit, and humanity had to come face to face with the fact that it now possessed the ability to destroy itself in a matter of minutes. Since then, we have lived in the shadow of nuclear weapons, a shadow that some say will endure until the end of history. Following the end of the Cold War, many have chosen to ignore the threat that nuclear weapons still pose, but simply refusing to acknowledge its threat cannot prevent nuclear war.¹ Today, there are nine nuclear states each with the capacity, even in a limited nuclear exchange, to set off a nuclear winter. At the same time, these terrible weapons have been credited with ending World War II, thereby making them a miracle of deliverance. Deterrence theory justifies the continued existence of nuclear weapons as providing stability to the world order, but to date, no system of international relations has not ended in war. Complete nuclear disarmament is the only possible course of action that will ensure humanity's survival. Achieving zero will not be easy and successful disarmament will require a degree of political accommodation and skilled diplomacy that is difficult to achieve.²

How Did We Get Here?

War has been a defining characteristic of human societies and of civilizations since the dawn of time. 18th century military theorist Karl von Clausewitz is famous for his book *On War* and his assertion that “war is the continuation of politics by other means.”³ War and diplomacy are merely two sides of the same coin and therefore rational. The idea that war is rational, has dominated western understanding of the relationship between war and politics for centuries. However, the face of battle has changed drastically over the course of modern history. Battle has always been brutal, violent, and above all, an expression of humanity, but the trajectory of battle has changed over time. *The Face of Battle* makes clear in the case studies of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme, that in Western civilization war has become increasingly mechanized, impersonal, and encompasses a greater proportion of space. This can be attributed to technological advancement.⁴ In the age of edged weapons, a man's capacity to inflict damage was limited to the reach of his arm. In the 21st century, technologists sit in a room, possibly thousands of kilometers from their target, and with the push of a button have the capacity to kill far greater than any medieval knight.⁵ Mankind has created weapons in the past hundred years that not only guarantee the termination of humanity, but the entire planet as well. Some military historians have asserted that battle has abolished

¹ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 189.

³ Lawrence Freedman, “Think again: War,” *Foreign Policy* 137 (2003): 16.

⁴ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*. (London: Bodley Head, 2014): 94, 158, and 214.

⁵ Charles Townshend, *The Oxford History of Modern War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 206.

itself.⁶ While it was true that the Cold War stopped direct battles between Western powers, battle has since resumed in the post-Cold War era, as evidenced by the Falkland and Gulf Wars. Battle remains a universal expression of humanity, and with the possession of nuclear weapons more dangerous than at any other time in history.

The trajectory of warfare in the modern era has been one of increasing scale, mechanization, and destructive capacity. Nuclear weapons are the embodiment of this capacity of humanity to destroy itself. The 20th century blurred the line between civilian and combatant. In the Great War, the starvation blockade by the Royal Navy aimed at destroying the fighting capacity of the German army through its civilian population. The mass conscription instituted during the war meant that war had truly been open to the masses on an unprecedented scale.⁷ In the Second World War, the strategic bombing campaigns evolved from precision bombing to outright carpet and fire bombings of entire cities killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. During the early 20th century there was a shift in Western consciousness placing civilians on the front lines of war. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate achievement of technology targeting entire civilian population centres.

Humanity's capacity to wage war has been shaped and driven by the technology that it produces. Today, that capacity is defined by the nuclear weapons that hang like the sword of Damocles over the population of the entire planet. However, unlike during the height of the Cold War where national security came to define everyday activities and the world lived in a constant state of semi-war, today most people disregard the threat hanging over them.⁸ Until 1949 the United States maintained the monopoly on the atomic bomb and its control of the air and sea was greater than even that of the British Empire in the 19th century.⁹ Today, the world is much more multipolar and the number of nuclear states has climbed to nine with each permanent member of the United Nations Security Council also being a nuclear power. The proliferation of nuclear states, particularly after India performed a successful test in 1974, pointed out the greatest flaw in the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty in preventing, "possible nuclear military diversion by non-member states."¹⁰ The rise of India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea has only increased the risk of a nuclear holocaust.

⁶ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Bodley Head, 2014): 303.

⁷ Heather Jones, "The Great War: How 1914-1918 Changed the relationship between War and Civilians," *The RUSI Journal* 159, no. 4 (2014): 88. eds.a.ebscohost.com (accessed April 1, 2015).

⁸ Joshua Freeman, *American Empire: The Rise of a Global Power, the Democratic Revolution at Home, 1945-2000* (New York: Viking, 2012), 85.

⁹ Geir Lundestad, *The American "Empire"* (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 41.

¹⁰ Michele Gaietta, *The Trajectory of Iran's Nuclear Program* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 13.

Agreements such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty, START (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the Iran Deal all speak to awareness in the international community that something has to be done about nuclear weapons. In the 21st century, there are many security threats including disease, climate change, and ethnic conflict, but only nuclear weapons have the potential to, in the space of minutes, wipe humanity from the face of the planet leaving behind nothing but a republic of insects and grass.¹¹ Even the scientists who invented the bomb almost immediately realized the dangerous potential of the weapons they had created, when combined with human fallibility.¹² The question on nuclear abolition, however, is where do we draw the line? It is estimated that it would only take about two hundred nuclear weapons to set off a nuclear winter. It is therefore clear that we must strive to get below the level where man has this capacity.

Where Do We Draw the Line?

Humans cannot predict the future. The best policy analysts and security advisors make educated guesses; however, it is never what we know that leads us to the edge of the abyss, but rather what we think we know that is proven false. Nuclear weapons have created a crystal ball effect in that we are aware of the perils that await us if we use nuclear weapons. This effect gives us a sort of stability in terror.¹³ However, while the fear is realistic and produces prudence in our leaders, fear is not a substitute for policy.¹⁴ Today, while we are aware of the threat to our survival posed by nuclear weapons, most politicians and citizens alike, in their inaction, allow for the continued existence of nuclear weapons. The mutually assured destruction between the United States and the Soviet Union has transformed into a balance of power between the nuclear powers in the world, that in some ways mirrors the balance of power relationship that dominated Europe after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815.¹⁵ The current assumption that this balance between the nuclear powers, while not equal, will endure, mirrors the arrogance of European statesmen in the 19th century for no system lasts forever. No statesman predicted that the glorious 19th century of European progress would end in the trenches of the Great War, nor can we be assured today that we have the capacity to restrain ourselves from using nuclear weapons. In the 19th century, the best diplomats in the golden age of statesmanship were unable to prevent war. In a world where social media and technology have replaced the gilded halls of

¹¹ Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3.

¹² Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, "About Pugwash." Accessed February 27, 2016. <http://pugwash.org/about-pugwash/>

¹³ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 44.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

diplomats, miscommunication and misinterpretation are even greater threats to successful diplomacy.

Achieving Zero: Is it Possible?

Mankind today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self-extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced. Existing arsenals of nuclear weapons alone are more than sufficient to destroy all life on earth. Failure of efforts to halt and reverse the arms race, in particular the nuclear arms race, increases the danger of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Yet the arms race continues... The increase in weapons, especially nuclear weapons, far from helping to strengthen international security, on the contrary weakens it... This situation both reflects and aggravates international tensions, sharpens conflicts in various regions of the world, hinders the process of détente, exacerbates the differences between opposing military alliances, jeopardizes the security of all States, heightens the sense of insecurity among all States, including the non-nuclear-weapon States, and increases the threat of nuclear war... Removing the threat of a world war- a nuclear war- is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is confronted with a choice: we must halt the arms race and proceed to disarmament or face annihilation.¹⁶

In October of 1962, the world stood at the brink of all out nuclear war. Only luck and a realization of the dangers of descending into the abyss allowed Kennedy and Khrushchev to pull back.¹⁷ The Cuban Missile Crisis imparted valuable lessons and a strong warning for future leaders about the dangers of living in a world with nuclear weapons. First, and foremost, it is important to take away from the Cuban Missile Crisis that Armageddon is possible, this is a matter of historical fact. Second, Armageddon is possible, even if nuclear powers do not want it. Finally, Armageddon is virtually inevitable when combining nuclear weapons and human fallibility.¹⁸ Even early in the Cold War President Truman stated that, “nuclear war could not be a possible policy for a rational man.”¹⁹ Yet in 1962, three rational men, Kennedy,

¹⁶ Joseph Rotblat, “Past Attempts to Abolish Nuclear Weapons,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 27-28.

¹⁷ James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *The Armageddon Letters* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 8.

¹⁸ James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *Zero: The Bottom Line of the Cuban Missile Crisis Working Draft* (January 31, 2016), 15.

¹⁹ Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, “Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 45.

Khrushchev, and Castro all seriously contemplated nuclear war.²⁰ Today we remain aware of the potential destructive capacity of using nuclear weapons, we cannot predict where the next threat will come from. Therefore, the only logical path to follow if we are, to paraphrase Henry Kissinger, to constrain mankind from destroying itself in a nuclear holocaust, is to reduce the nuclear arsenals of the world to zero.²¹

Some argue that it is impossible to cleanse our small planet of nuclear weapons, that humanity's nuclear innocence is now lost, and cannot be regained. These academics, policy advisors, and defense analysts assert that, "the atomic fire cannot be extinguished. The fear of its use will remain a part of the human psyche for the rest of human history."²² In the eyes of those who say the genie cannot be put back in the bottle, a policy of minimum deterrence is the best we can hope for. As of 2015, there are nine states in possession of nuclear weapons.

1. United States	7200 warheads
2. Russia	7500 warheads
3. Great Britain	215 warheads
4. France	300 warheads
5. China	260 warheads
6. Israel	80 warheads
7. India	110-120 warheads
8. Pakistan	120-130 warheads
9. North Korea	<10 warheads
Total:	15 800 warheads ²³

In the world today, there are 15 800 warheads in existence.²⁴ While a staggering number, it is dwarfed compared to the number of warheads that used to exist during the height of the Cold War. It is estimated it would take only two hundred weapons to explode, or 1.3% of the current warheads in existence to set off a nuclear winter and destroy all life on the planet.²⁵ A regional war between India and Pakistan, even if it involved no other players, has the potential to end not only civilization, but also humanity. If we accept that two hundred weapons are sufficient to destroy life on the planet, a minimum deterrent arsenal would need to be below that level. However reducing the arsenals of the big powers has the potential to make

²⁰ *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*, DVD, directed by Errol Morris (Sony Pictures Classics, 2003).

²¹ Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 6.

²² Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 5.

²³ James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *Zero: The Bottom Line of the Cuban Missile Crisis Working Draft* (January 31, 2016), 102-103.

²⁴ James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *Zero: The Bottom Line of the Cuban Missile Crisis Working Draft* (January 31, 2016), 102-103.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

nuclearization more inviting to smaller powers.²⁶ What is more deterrence, even a minimum level below two hundred warheads invites proliferation as well as escalation.²⁷ Force requirements for minimum deterrence would be a question of relativity and the vulnerability of retaliatory forces.²⁸ However, such a situation would invite states to cheat, for in a world of one hundred to two hundred nuclear weapons, the relative value of each weapon increases exponentially than in a world of fifteen thousand warheads. This in turn would encourage the cheating state to use nuclear weapons if there was a situation where there was not a threat of retaliation, or at least less retaliation.

“The most effective guarantee against the danger of nuclear war and the use of nuclear weapons is nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.”²⁹ Entire books have been written on not only why achieving Zero is necessary, but on how we can get there through technological and societal verification and incremental reductions in nuclear forces. The elimination of nuclear weapons is not impossible. Past diplomatic efforts to eliminate biological and chemical weapons from use have been fairly successful and taught the international community valuable lessons on how the system can be improved and modified to fit nuclear weapons.³⁰ Nuclear diplomacy has the same possibility for success, however to date talks have failed to make significant headway to eradicate nuclear arsenals as nuclear weapons represent different things to different nations.

Nuclear weapons mean many different things to different people and there are many goals encompassed within the framework of nuclear policy. In the Cold War, the primary goal was to deter an attack by the Soviet Union on the United States and vice versa. Nuclear weapons have been justified as deterring a nuclear or conventional attack on the United States or its allies. Nuclear weapons are supposed to minimize the incentives for actors to strike first in an international crisis, and if deterrence fails, help defeat an attack on the United States or its allies with the least

²⁶ Jack Steinberger, Essam Galal, and Mikhail Milstein, “A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Is it Desirable? Is it Necessary?,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 57.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁸ Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, “Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 47.

²⁹ Joseph Rotblat, “Past Attempts to Abolish Nuclear Weapons,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 28.

³⁰ James Leonard, Martin Kaplan, and Benjamin Sanders, “Verification and Enforcement in a NWFWorld,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 135.

damage to the US and its allies. These weapons are supposed to support US foreign policy and prevent nuclear corrosion, while also providing support for arms control negotiations.³¹ Needless to say, the goals of having nuclear weapons are diverse and are to some extent contradictory.

The primary justification for the possession of nuclear weapons can be encompassed in the deterrence theory. At its most basic level military deterrence is simply means, “the process of convincing a potential enemy, by the threat of force, that he is better off if he does not use military force against you.”³² The concept is hardly a new one, but in an age of nuclear weapons is a much deadlier one. Nuclear deterrence relies on the idea of second-strike capability, but nuclear weapons pose a usability paradox. “Nuclear weapons can prevent aggression only if there is a possibility that they will be used, but we do not want to make them so usable that anyone is tempted to use one.”³³ Nuclear deterrence has been called 99.95% stable and is credited with the lack of warfare between major Western powers since the end of World War II.³⁴ However, this cannot be proven and could very well be a case of post hoc ergo propter hoc, or after, therefore because of it.³⁵ Many other political and economic factors have changed in the West, and in particular in Europe since the end of World War II, than just the invention of nuclear weapons. The only role of nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War era is to deter the use of nuclear weapons by other actors. Therefore, if all nuclear weapons were to be eliminated, they would not be needed to deter.³⁶

Since nuclear weapons brought about the end of World War II, some have credited these weapons with being the harbingers of peace. Into the 1960s, many saw nuclear weapons as usable tools of war, underestimating the destructive capacity of these technologies we had created. The Cuban Missile Crisis brought an end to the idea that nuclear weapons were just another tool in the military arsenal. Instead, the weapons were justified in terms of deterrence. The arguments to build bigger nuclear weapons and to keep the ones already made are eerily similar to the arguments put forward by the National Rifle Association (NRA). As the comedian Jim Jeffries humorously points out, the justification to be constantly armed is for

³¹ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 135.

³² Ibid., 32.

³³ Ibid., 34.

³⁴ Jack Steinberger, Essam Galal, and Mikhail Milstein, “A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Is it Desirable? Is it Necessary?,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 54.

³⁵ Michael McGwire, “The Anatomy of the Argument,” in *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, ed. Joseph Rotblat (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 23.

³⁶ Cathleen Fisher, “The Phased Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” in *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, ed. Joseph Rotblat (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 41.

personal protection, or in the case of nuclear weapons the protection of the state. However, being constantly armed increases the risk of accidents and human error. If one follows this argument and says that to prevent accidents by locking the weapon away then it is no longer protection.³⁷ This line of reasoning is the same with nuclear weapons as it is with assault rifles. Weapons of war are not tools of peace, yet even the National Parks Service in the United States propagates the idea that, “the Minuteman Missile remains an iconic weapon in the American nuclear arsenal. It holds the power to destroy civilization, but is meant as a nuclear deterrent to maintain peace and prevent war.”³⁸ The argument of deterrence theory and nuclear weapons as harbingers of peace distracts attention from the threat that nuclear weapons poses and blocks attempts to reduce nuclear arsenals.

In the post-Cold War era, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Regan’s evil empire no longer existing, security specialists have scrambled to find a way to justify the retention of nuclear weapons. Some strategists argue that the thousands of nuclear warheads should be retained to deter an attack by an unnamed foe with conventional arms. Recent history demonstrates the folly of such an extension of deterrence theory. North Vietnam was not deterred from fighting the United States for almost twenty years by the size of the United States nuclear arsenal. Nor was Argentina’s military government deterred from invading the Falkland Islands in 1982 by the British nuclear weapons.³⁹ In the 21st century, nuclear weapons have certainly provided no deterrent for terrorist organizations striking civilian targets in nuclear states such as United States, France, and the United Kingdom. The assumption that nuclear weapons help to keep the peace or serve as a deterrent against an attack has not been borne out by history.

The justification to keep nuclear weapons for deterrence purposes is wearing thin. Under the Charter of the United Nations all states have the right to self-defence. No type of weapon is explicitly excluded, but limitations on self-defence date back before the UN to the 1907 Hague Convention on the laws and customs on warfare. Of particular importance when discussing nuclear weapons is the caveat placed on self-defence, which prohibits arms causing unnecessary suffering or the destruction of the enemy’s property.⁴⁰ There is no guarantee that even a small tactical nuclear weapon targeted at a military target would not escalate to large-scale nuclear war, thereby causing widespread damage if not the end of humanity. Perhaps with the

³⁷ Jim Jefferies, “Gun Control,” *BARE*. Accessed February 27, 2016 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rR9IaXH1M0>.

³⁸ National Parks Service, “Deterring War, Preserving Peace,” *Minuteman Missile*. Accessed February 27, 2016 from <http://www.nps.gov/mimi/index.htm>.

³⁹ Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar, “Preface,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 5.

⁴⁰ Jozef Goldblat, “Making Nuclear Weapons Illegal,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 158.

realization of the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons, some nuclear powers have pledged “no first use” of their nuclear stockpiles. China pledged in 1964 not to use its nuclear weapons first. The Soviet Union made a similar pledge under Brezhnev in 1982.⁴¹ France has made a slightly different pledge in that it will not use its nuclear weapons against a state that does not possess, nor seeks to have nuclear weapons.⁴² During the Cold War, a declaration of “no first use” was seen in the United States and Western Europe as an invitation for the Warsaw Pact to invade Western Europe using their superior conventional forces. Besides which, a peace pledge of “no first use,” is presumed by many to go up in smoke once the first shot was fired.⁴³ When speaking about deterrence and the elimination of nuclear weapons the analogy of gun fighters facing off is remarkably appropriate. Each would like to put down their weapons, but are concerned about getting shot in the process.⁴⁴ Deterrence may provide some stability to the world order, but in a terrifying paradox deterrence only works with the lurking fear that in a confrontation it might fail.⁴⁵

Nuclear weapons are the culmination of centuries of advancements in warfare extending the size, range, and technological capacity of man to inflict violence on his opponent. Yet, nuclear weapons have not completely destroyed the western restraints on war encompassed in the Just War theory.⁴⁶ Broadly broken into two categories the first *jus ad bellum* regulates when a legitimate authority can wage a just war and the second *jus in bello* regulates how an authority can wage war.⁴⁷ Two important restrictions placed on the waging of war dating back to Thomas Aquinas are the degree of force used in war should be proportional to the end, which is a just peace. Secondly, that war could and should only be fought in the defence of life.⁴⁸ Nuclear weapons challenge the long held principle that civilians should not be the primary targets of military operations.

The word overkill comes to mind when considering the size and scope of the nuclear forces of Russia and the United States, particularly because most of the

⁴¹ Jozef Goldblat, “Making Nuclear Weapons Illegal,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 160.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 161.

⁴³ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 169-170.

⁴⁴ Michael McCwire, “The Anatomy of the Argument,” in *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, ed. Joseph Rotblat (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 31.

⁴⁵ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 35.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁴⁷ Douglas P. Lackey, *The Ethics of War and Peace* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1989), 28 & 58.

⁴⁸ Paul S. Rowe, *Religion and Global Politics* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2012), 209.

nuclear arsenals of both countries are aimed at the arsenals of the other.⁴⁹ In the 1970s there was a shift in US policy where the primary targets of the nuclear arsenal became the Soviet's strategic forces rather than civilian centres.⁵⁰ It is now widely held that nuclear weapons have no military utility.⁵¹ Indeed, even in the first decade of the nuclear age when there was little chance of retaliation, military and political leaders shied away from using nuclear weapons.⁵² In the case of Libya it was proposed to use a bunker-busting nuclear warhead to target their alleged chemical weapons. However, the proposal was rejected, not because it would be illegal, but on the grounds that a conventional weapon could do the job just as well.⁵³ "If nuclear weapons have no military value, and a deterrent posture does not deter, but does threaten catastrophe and invites proliferation, the only alternative is a policy seeking the elimination of nuclear weapons."⁵⁴

How do we negotiate to zero?

The elimination of nuclear weapons has been called by many, utopian and impossible. The need to reduce the nuclear arsenals of the world to zero is necessary because Armageddon is possible. Armageddon is possible even if nuclear powers do not want it. Finally, Armageddon is virtually inevitable when combining nuclear weapons and human fallibility.⁵⁵ Complete elimination of nuclear weapons will not happen overnight, and will only be attained by passing through

⁴⁹ Albert Carnesale et al. *Living With Nuclear Weapons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 108.

⁵⁰ Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, "Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 43.

⁵¹ Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar, "Preface," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), vii.

⁵² Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, "Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 39.

⁵³ Frank Blackaby, "Introduction and Summary," in *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, ed. Joseph Rotblat (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 11.

⁵⁴ Jack Steinberger, Essam Galal, and Mikhail Milstein, "A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Is it Desirable? Is it Necessary?," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 59.

⁵⁵ James G. Blight and Janet M. Lang, *Zero: The Bottom Line of the Cuban Missile Crisis Working Draft* (January 31, 2016), 15.

intermediate steps of disarmament.⁵⁶ Perseverance and practical diplomacy is necessary to achieve Zero and prevent Armageddon. The greatest barrier to the attainment of complete nuclear disarmament is political will.⁵⁷ Many different plans have been put forward by policy leaders and politicians in many countries around the world to get us to zero, only to be rejected as impossible. On January 15, 1986 Gorbachev outlined a program of nuclear disarmament that would have seen the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2000, but the opportunity was missed and the threat of nuclear warfare continues to hang over us today.⁵⁸

Diplomacy has evolved to fit with the times. In the time of Karl von Clausewitz, diplomacy was the activity of princes conducted in palaces. In the 20th century, diplomacy was the activity of statesmen and public servants taking place behind closed doors. Today, diplomacy is often played out in real time in traditional news media and on social media platforms. No man exemplifies this trend more than U.S. President Donald Trump. His communication style differs greatly from that of his predecessors and nothing demonstrates this more than his dealings with North Korea. Traditionally, nuclear diplomacy has been a careful balancing of state interests and incentives. Both the Bush and Obama administrations used multilateral negotiations, incentives such as economic relief, and punitive measures such as sanctions to diplomatically address North Korea's nuclear program. While U.S. President George W. Bush did include North Korea in his "axis of evil" address, social media has radically changed not only the narrative, but the very means the discussion takes place in.⁵⁹ Social media allows for instantaneous conversation. A fact that may in fact hinder nuclear negotiations as messages can very easily be distorted when presented through an impersonal medium without the benefit of the many social cues that take place in face to face interactions.

Diplomacy is defined as "the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country's representatives abroad."⁶⁰ Social media is closely tied to the personality of the individual comments and attacks are

⁵⁶ Shalheveth Freier, "International Security in a NWFWorld," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 147.

⁵⁷ Cathleen Fisher, "The Phased Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," in *Nuclear Weapons: The Road to Zero*, ed. Joseph Rotblat (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 49.

⁵⁸ Joseph Rotblat, "Past Attempts to Abolish Nuclear Weapons," in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 29.

⁵⁹ CNN Library, "North Korea Nuclear Timeline Fast Facts," *CNN*. Accessed May 15, 2019 from <https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/29/world/asia/north-korea-nuclear-timeline---fast-facts/index.html>.

⁶⁰ Oxford Dictionary, "Diplomacy." Accessed May 15, 2019 from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/diplomacy>.

much more personal. Instead of negotiations taking place between professional intermediaries, social media has allowed the conversation between political leaders to be much more direct and much more public. As can be seen in the case of U.S. President Donald Trump, social media has become a tool to berate and name leaders whom he disagrees with in an attempt to elicit a response. Trump has called North Korean leader Kim Jong Un everything from a “smart cookie,” a “madman”, and “little rocket man.”⁶¹ The Tweet below displays one example of the personal level that social media has taken the discussion between world leaders comes in the exchange on twitter from November 11, 2017.⁶²



This childish level of name calling, if it previously happened, was behind closed doors. Social media has made diplomacy much more public and personal in nature and has also changed the public’s involvement in it. Previously, the public was informed of the progress of negotiations by politicians or diplomats standing behind a podium or releasing a carefully crafted statement. Today the general public can follow negotiations in real time and informed directly by their leaders. As can be seen this one tweet was liked 578,000 times. In November 2017, several tweets from President Donald Trump exemplify this.⁶³

⁶¹ Saba Hamedy and Joyce Tseng, “All the times President Trump has Insulted North Korea,” CNN. Accessed May 1, 2019 from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/22/politics/donald-trump-north-korea-insults-timeline/index.html>.

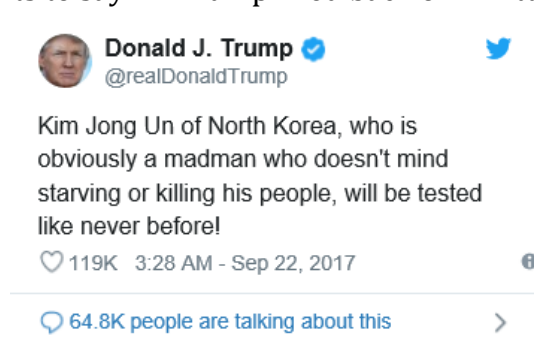
⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.



The direct contact that social media allows leaders to have with their citizens is a new feature to nuclear diplomacy and it is unclear if this aids in negotiations.

Traditional nuclear diplomacy was built around the idea that, “nuclear war could not be a possible policy for a rational man.”⁶⁴ Yet, we saw in 1962, that three rational men, Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro all seriously contemplated nuclear war.⁶⁵ Today, it is unclear in the conduction of nuclear diplomacy via social media that rational heads prevail. In September 2017, Kim Jong Un called out Trump, saying, “action is the best option in treating the dotard who, hard of hearing, is uttering only what he wants to say.”⁶⁶ Trump fired back on Twitter:⁶⁷



⁶⁴ Carl Kaysen, Robert McNamara, and George Rathjens, “Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War,” in *A Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Desirable? Feasible?*, ed. Joseph Rotblat, Jack Steinberger, and Bhalchandra Udgaonkar (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 45.

⁶⁵ *The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara*, DVD, directed by Errol Morris (Sony Pictures Classics, 2003).

⁶⁶ Saba Hamedy and Joyce Tseng, “All the times President Trump has Insulted North Korea,” CNN. Accessed May 1, 2019 from <https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/22/politics/donald-trump-north-korea-insults-timeline/index.html>.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

North Korea's state newspaper replied by characterizing President Trump and his rhetoric on social media as, "a shriek made by the mentally deranged man."⁶⁸ This exchange on the mental stability of leaders of nuclear powers is worrying to say the least. The idea that rational men would never use their arsenals of nuclear weapons was a key idea of nuclear diplomacy during the Cold War. Its absence in present day nuclear talks is discouraging for those who hope to eliminate nuclear weapons from existence.

Though the knowledge of nuclear weapons cannot be extinguished, it may be possible to put the pin back in the grenade. The elimination of nuclear weapons is not an easy goal, but those that are worthwhile rarely are. How this goal is chased has varied based on the personalities of political leaders in office. Traditionally diplomacy, and specifically nuclear diplomacy, was the activity of statemen and public servants conducted behind closed doors. Today, social media has made communication much more immediate and public. The breakdown of nuclear talks once again between the United States and North Korea has shown that diplomacy conducted through social media meets the same challenges and fallacies of traditional diplomacy. The world is changing rapidly, but, however it is conducted, the negotiation of the elimination of nuclear weapons must remain a priority for world leaders.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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