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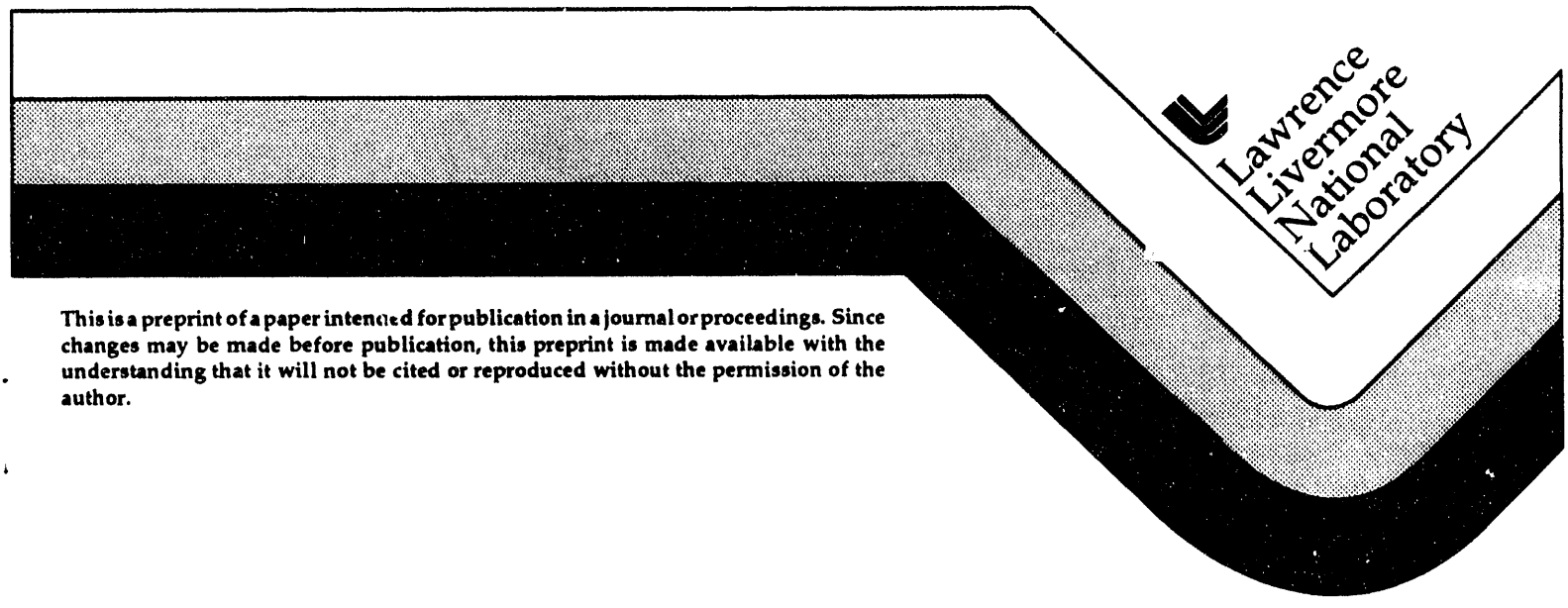

ARMS CONTROL IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS: THE UNITED STATES AND THE UNITED NATIONS AT THE MID-POINT OF THE 1990'S*

An Address by
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Ladies and Gentlemen; Friends and Colleagues:

I am very pleased to be with you here at Le Chateau Montebello for the Tenth Annual Ottawa Verification Symposium. That this is the tenth symposium reflects both the arms control revolution which has taken place in the last decade and the arms control challenges which we now face. We can be proud of what we have accomplished, but our work is not done. Indeed, if we do not follow through on our agenda effectively, we will fail to achieve critical non-proliferation goals. We may also lose historic arms control achievements.

These dangers, of course, arise because key regions around the world remain in turmoil, often afflicted with outmoded thinking, outlaw regimes, or terrorists. Even where democracy, human rights, open markets, non-proliferation, and the peaceful resolution of disputes have made important gains, backsliding is common. That these dangers remain is a given -- a challenge which I believe we are well positioned to meet. Unfortunately, we may be on the verge of tragic failure.

My concern is that we may be drifting intellectually in ways which could be critically debilitating as we prepare to take the next important steps. We speak and act increasingly as if we have forgotten where we are in arms control, how we got there, and where we were going. By arms control, I mean arms control writ large--be it negotiations, treaty implementation, non-proliferation, confidence-building, defense conversion, or as an adjunct to peacekeeping.

To illustrate my point, consider how we speak of being in the "post-Cold War era." We define our current situation by reference to the past rather then to the future. This is not all wrong. We are, in fact, in transition from one set of circumstances to another. We declare the Cold War over, but we must deal still with remnants and artifacts of that age.

And we are not yet able to give a clear name to the era that is to follow, but that is not all wrong either. Great uncertainty prevents us from naming this era in which we will enter a new century and a new millennia.

A rough parallel existed in 1945. Everyone knew the "post-War Era" had begun, if for no better reason than that World War II had just come to an end. A grand alliance had defeated forces of totalitarianism and militarism. The world was ready again to turn to the task of economic rebuilding. Despite highly polarized views on the nature of the Soviet Union, a near consensus emerged supporting an inclusive United Nations with a mandate designed to avoid the weaknesses of the League of Nations. Two world wars in a century had made clear that national security required international security.

Among those "present at the creation" of that new world order after World War II were a number of self-proclaimed realists. They cautioned that a new global structure dependent upon cooperation with what many then called "Soviet Russia" would not be easy to achieve, even if America avoided a return to isolationism. Still, most of these realists no less than the idealists, expected that World War II would likely be the last big war. Hiroshima and Nagasaki only reinforced this view. While many began to speak of the dangers of an emerging "Atomic Age," few anticipated the Cold War as we came to experience it. Even fewer anticipated the number of sizeable conventional hot wars which would co-exist with the Cold War standoff between the superpowers and their respective blocs.

Today, one notices a somewhat comparable, though less ideologically polarized, divergence of perceptions about what our current post-war era might become. We have optimists and pessimists. The optimists have seen democracy spread among developing countries and extend itself to central and eastern Europe. They have seen the new democracy survive a coup attempt in the heart of the Soviet Union and bring about a relatively peaceful dissolution of that empire.

The optimists take comfort that archaic command economies have been discredited by the success of competitive marketplaces. Political and economic reform seem to be advancing together with their futures linked. A global economy has been codified in part by EC-92, the Canadian-US Free Trade Zone, and the negotiation of a North American Free Trade Agreement.

The optimists go on to remind us that some 152 nations have committed themselves to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. A comparable number have signed the new Chemical Weapons Convention. The nuclear superpowers are cooperating to reduce their nuclear armaments to a small fraction of their Cold War levels. Europe is reducing conventional arms, and Open Skies exist now over much of North America and Eurasia.

The optimists have seen United Nations peacekeeping build expectations that war might end in Angola and Cambodia. The United Nations Security Council has acted against Saddam Hussein's aggression and proliferation with resolve long ago assumed unachievable. In fact, the Council has imposed upon Iraq the most intrusive challenge inspection regime ever enforced short of a full scale military occupation.

Indeed, certain dictates of "national sovereignty" which dampen international cooperation and openness have been eased by many nations through arms control verification regimes and by CSCE, EC-92, and perhaps once again through enforcement of the UN Charter. In short, an optimist today can lay out in great detail an architecture for an "era of global cooperation" held together by a greater acceptance of certain international political, economic, and security norms.

Unfortunately, a pessimist today can also document the path to a markedly different post-Cold War era--one in which political divisions and economic collapse breed violence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The tide of democracy has not receded, but neither are new waves pushing to great heights. In several nations of the former Soviet Union, for example, the democratic process itself has enhanced hardline communists or returned them to power. Democratic forces remain beleaguered in others including Russia itself.
Economic recession in developed countries -- aggravated by national debt, the restructuring of domestic industries, the collapse of COMECON economies, and the turmoil of defense conversion --has created significant pressure for protectionism among key trading partners. It has created even greater economic hardships for developing countries and the new democracies. These are the conditions which historically have bred the "strongman" or the "man on horseback." These are the conditions which exacerbate ethnic conflict and national rivalries. And these are the conditions which sometimes create the moral ambiguity under which the United States and other advanced democracies have turned their backs on the world.

The pessimist need only cite what was Yugoslavia to remind us through words such as "balkanization," "ethnic cleansing," and "war crimes" of the darkest days of the Twentieth Century. This does not inspire millennial expectations as we approach the Twenty-first Century.

Nor does the pessimist take great comfort from the unparalleled arms control and non-proliferation achievements of the last six years. START II is breathtaking but awaits confrontation in a Russian parliament filled with resurgent hardliners. And even START I is not yet ratified as Ukraine and Khazakhstan show no urgency in living up to their obligations under the Lisbon Agreements to adhere to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states.

In other troubled regions of the world, certain advocates of "nuclear options" hope that the Lisbon Accord will collapse so as to make their own pursuit of nuclear weapons less objectionable. How optimistic can we be if we must face the continued possibility of a nuclear arms race in South Asia? And how optimistic can we be when we contemplate whether or not an Iraqi general might someday decide that the overthrow of Saddam Hussein is not too big a price to pay to end UN sanctions and inspections -- so that Iraq might quickly complete a nuclear weapon?

North Korea's construction of a large-scale plutonium reprocessing facility has been blocked by IAEA inspections combined with the North-South denuclearization agreement, but Pyongyang's current obstructionism seems determined to deny the IAEA knowledge which might reveal a smaller program pursuing an atomic bomb. How optimistic can we be about the future if North Korea were to obtain even one nuclear weapon?

And how optimistic can we be if the massive nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet Union is 99.99 percent secure when a mere one-one hundredths of one percent of those stocks unaccountable could still mean several "loose nucs?" Indeed, how optimistic can we be that the violent breakup experienced in Yugoslavia will not be replicated among some new states of the former Soviet Union which have nuclear weapons on their soil? And what of the nuclear weapons and weapons technologies of a communist China feeling its own uncertain way into the future?

The optimist reminds us that we are not without resources to deal with such instability. Remember how well CFE transformed a traditional arms reduction treaty to serve also as a vehicle for regional stability. Under the watchful eye of the other treaty parties, the new nations of the former Soviet Union reallocated among themselves peacefully vast arsenals of tanks, artillery, aircraft, and armored fighting vehicles. One can wonder what might have happened in Yugoslavia had a similar framework existed there. The pessimist can respond, however, that these very weapons, along with great numbers of paramilitary equipment outside the treaty, are now being deployed in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and elsewhere along borders once undefended, and some are already being used in brutal ethnic fighting.

Nor does the pessimist take great comfort in the potential for international organizations to meet the challenges of the post-Cold War era. The very international efforts which had generated hope in recent years today find their gains slipping in many hot spots such as Angola and Cambodia and nearly impotent in Bosnia-Herzegovena.

Indeed, calls for the United States and NATO to intervene in Bosnia are a measure of how little beyond the Cold War we have come. I say this not because American policy or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have been suitable only for the Cold War environment. Rather, the opposite now seems clear. Whatever their limitations, they seem better prepared to deal with much of the disorder of the post-Cold War era than popular alternatives.

The United States, Canada, and the other NATO allies, particularly those present here today, played a vital role in bringing the Cold War to a peaceful conclusion because they brought together leadership and the cooperation of nations committed to certain common rules of behavior. Their success has created considerable pressure on other international organizations to demonstrate comparable success and to operate where NATO cannot, should not, or will not intervene.

The difficulties new and large existing organizations are experiencing in dealing with regional violence is not simply a reflection of their newness or their size. Nor is it because they necessarily face more complex problems, although these are all factors. For the most part, the difficulties they experience arise from the lack of agreement among their members as to what constitutes clearly unacceptable behavior by sovereign nations and what responses are appropriate. In short, international organizations are having difficulty agreeing on what are the thresholds and ground rules for united action?

The optimists, nevertheless, see international law strengthened and welcome a multiplicy of organizations or coalitions, as in the case of the Gulf War, maturing and providing a growing arsenal for peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace encouraging, and peace enforcing. To the United Nations, CSCE, ASEAN, and the like, the optimists would add the influence of arms control inspection bodies such the IAEA which are provided for by the NPT, the CWC, CFE, the CSCE CSBMs Agreements and special organizations such as UNSCOM which conducts intrusive inspections in Iraq.

The pessimists perceive instead a cosmetic structure easily built among like-minded nations, but facing collapse when consensus is required to deal with regimes unwilling to play by the rules. They see a diplomatic process bogged down dealing with armed gangs in famine-stricken Somalia as offering little hope of diffusing the Middle East before time runs out on the clock of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Indeed, perhaps that is the difference in perspective. The optimists count our accomplishments, the pessimists see where time is running out.

The lesson we should draw from these contrasting optimistic and pessimistic images of the world to come is that both are accurately describing different manifestations of the same reality. We have come far, and yet we may still come up short. For example, few of the 152 current parties to the NPT posed the serious proliferation threat presented by today's very small number of suspect regimes, inside and outside the treaty. We should not be surprised that the most difficult cases must be dealt with at the end.

Should we therefore be optimistic or pessimistic? My own advice is that we should be both. Psychologically, a controlled pessimism in the near term will keep adrenalin levels high, which may help us meet the immediate challenges; a strong long term optimism can generate hope and a vision for the future.

Analytically this is sound as well. Remaining dangers, new challenges, and near term reverses could create a post-Cold War "era of tragedy." If we follow through now, however, with the strategy which has thus far produced success, we may achieve an "era of global cooperation" unprecedented in history. Let there be no doubt, however. If unprecedented cooperation coincides with a time of tragedy, we will be remembered for the tragedy.

Consider the consequences of failure. What if the Iran/Iraq War had lasted long enough for Saddam Hussein to achieve his A-bomb? Or what if Saddam had waited until he had that bomb before he invaded Kuwait? What if the violent Romanian revolution proves to be the model of change for a future nuclear armed, collapsing North Korea? What if a fundamentalist Islam or a fundamentalist Hinduism should rise to power in South Asia in the context of an Indo-Pakistani war over Kashmir?

Even absent violence, the dangers are great. Perhaps the prospects of a "nuclear Yugoslavia" in the former Soviet Union are exaggerated, but who is to say that what are now nuclear bargaining chips will not themselves become ends rather than means. The failure of Ukraine or Kazakhstan or Belarus to adhere formally to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons states could lead to the emergence of additional states with nuclear weapons. At that point, the entire non-proliferation regime could begin to unravel. What would India and Pakistan do? Brazil and Argentina? And, eventually, Japan and Germany?

Such a plethora of deadly possibilities could lead to policy paralysis. The current weak sense of direction in thinking about arms control, however, results more from complacency than from an emotional overload. Both excessive optimism and excessive pessimism are contributing to the problem. One sees this complacency in old and new themes current today which are de-innervating arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping. Consider some of the most common of these themes, which accurately summarize our condition, but often encourage the wrong policy outcomes or undermine the necessary intensity of effort.

Consider the most frequent of these themes: "the Cold War is over." Yes, but do we mean to say that our interest in international human rights, economic development, and regional security was driven only by the Cold War competition? Of course not. However far behind one may believe we have left the Cold War, the arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping challenges we face were never solely about the Cold War whatever the superpower dimensions of each Cold War crisis. They were and are driven by our interest in creating better, safer lives.

And certainly our priorities are influenced by a widespread belief that "global security is far greater now than ever before." And it probably is, but the risks in some regions, including nuclear risks, may also be greater now than ever before. And in the nuclear age, can we really isolate ourselves from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Only a few peacekeeping operations today deal directly with nations of proliferation concern, but nearly all peacekeeping has implications for how potential proliferators calculate their own security equation.

We are also victims of our own success because "a comprehensive regime of arms control agreements, export controls, and peacekeeping concepts, which we have long sought, is now largely in place." After the two Start Treaties and the Chemical Weapons Convention enter into force, a broad foundation for the future will exist, but vital work remains. Implementation of these agreements will involve large efforts for many years to come. Furthermore, removing the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction will not be achieved by negotiating any particular treaty. Rather, tenacious pursuit of export controls, regional security and political reform will be necessary for many years to come. Likewise, new peacekeeping operations are being generated far faster than old ones are retired. In a sense, the comprehensive regime to promote security and stability which is emerging truly is only a foundation upon which to build the real structure and process.

We are reminded that "arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping must not be separated from broader diplomatic and military considerations." And that is correct. Indeed the key to our recent success in arms control is that we designed our arms control strategy to reinforce our diplomatic and military strategies. We may have been guilty of giving arms control greater centrality than it merited during the Cold War. We may have isolated it too much from the rest of our foreign policy agenda. Today, however, we seem headed in the opposite direction, burying arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping under diplomatic business as usual. We are in danger of underestimating the contributions that these often technical,legal, and operational approaches can make to our diplomacy. Why is that?

Often arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping proposals are thought to be idealistic or ideological or divorced from geopolitical realities in other ways. And sometimes they are. In arms control this is often expressed by the cliche, "You cannot have an agreement if you don't have trust, and if you do have trust, you don't need an agreement." In peacekeeping, a parallel, but less explicit formulation seems to argue that you can agree to deploy peacekeeping forces if there is peace between the antagonists, but if there is a risk of serious violence, then peacekeeping must wait.

Both of these critical sentiments seem shallow and idealistic when compared with the real world. In arms control and in peacekeeping, you take risks when the possible gains warrant those risks. Classical diplomacy must venture where there is moral ambiguity; why must we have absolute moral clarity before we use our arms control or peacekeeping tools?

Sometimes, arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping approaches can be criticized as overly formalistic or inflexible. Again, we must insure that they are not. At the same time, we should design our tools for the task at hand. After START I was completed, many declared so-called formal arms control with its often lengthy negotiation of treaties to be over. This view was reinforced by the dynamism of President Bush's September 1991 initiative on tactical nuclear weapons. Yet when the time came for START II, a formal treaty was insisted upon to lock in these long term commitments and that treaty was negotiated quickly because it was based upon START I. Certainly, next steps in arms control are likely to be complex or difficult and, therefore, often small, tentative, or informal, but who really believes that no further steps will be taken through formal negotiations?

Follow through in non-proliferation will also be characterized less by grand diplomatic events than by tenacity, persistence, and strained bilateral relations with nations on both sides of the supply and demand equation. The renewed shine on peacekeeping has already begun to lose its luster as the word "quagmire" once again frequents our vocabulary. One must wonder whether senior leadership will remain active in the face of hard work, significant economic costs, real political risks, and considerable diplomatic unpleasantness, all for what are likely to be incremental payoffs. In such a climate, a lower profile for arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping will become increasingly attractive. This lower profile will also increase the influence of those special economic interests and elements of bureaucratic "clientitis" that have seen concern over issues such as human rights, treaty compliance, and export controls complicate business as usual in trade and diplomacy.

A brief respite from the hectic pace of political change, diplomatic activism, and military deployments of recent years would be welcome and, in the context of a careful but quick stocktaking, could prove useful. Today's pre-occupation with the domestic economy offers that opportunity. Too much delay, however, could cost us the opportunity to complete the architecture for an era of global cooperation and could see tragedy in any one of a number of regions where time is running out and where arms control, non-proliferation, or peacekeeping endeavors could make the difference between success or failure. If the analysis presented thus far is essentially correct, then a number of policy conclusions would seem warranted.

First, above all, we must solidify international norms against oppression, proliferation, and aggression by making clear that violations of those norms will carry severe consequences. Rhetoric alone, however, cannot stand the real challenges we face. The will to act must be clear, and that is unlikely unless serious options for such action are recognized.

Take, for example, our crusade against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In January, 1992, the United Nations Security Council, at the Head of State level, announced that such proliferation would be a threat to international security. In the special language of diplomacy, that is a very strong statement. Coming as it did after the imposition of UNSCOM on Iraq, it should have sent a very strong signal.

Almost immediately, however, questions arose. Does this apply only to those who have undertaken treaty obligations, or has non-proliferation taken on the force of customary international law? If it only applies to parties to the NPT, BWC, and CWC, how do we deal with the non-parties of concern today? And how would we deal with a nation like North Korea which has threatened to abrogate its obligations to the IAEA? And how would we deal with a democracy like India with whom we have expanding ties? We face similar questions with respect to our resolve on crimes against humanity and acts of aggression in Bosnia, Cambodia, and elsewhere. If we lose our credibility at this critical moment, we will have a new world disorder as the dominant characteristic of the post-Cold War era.

Second, we must order our priorities with greater attention to the clock. Complete and general disarmament is an objective of the United States by law, but it is not a near term possibility. Nuclear, chemical, or biological warfare in the Middle East, South Asia, or the Korean Peninsula could be.

Third, we should use all of the tools at our disposal including global, regional, and bilateral initiatives, formal as well as informal to address our highest priority problems. In the end, regional problems will have to be resolved by the nations of the region. The Republic of Korea has set an excellent example for others with its NPT Plus approach to Pyongyang.

In some cases, diplomatic involvement from outside the region can be a helpful catalyst. In other cases, such as with the CWC, a global approach may be a useful supplement if care is taken to avoid certain traps. We must recognize interrelationships, but we must also discourage rigid linkages be they between one nation's participation in the NPT and another's in the CWC, or between horizontal and vertical proliferation. We must recognize that it will be easier for many nations to undertake obligations if they are not singled out, but we should be suspicious of any state which insists on an all or no one approach. We should expect each nation to do what it can, and we should insist that immediate threats to international security be addressed by the parties concerned. Arms control is everyone's business, and the same applies to easing regional tensions.

Nothing would be more counterproductive today than to deflect the spotlight away from our immediate proliferation concerns by a return to any ideology which singles out the existing nuclear weapons states or calls upon them to achieve certain preconditions for movement by others. We should expect states in different regions with different security situations to address the concerns in their regions.

If Europe focuses on the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union while Latin America works to bring the Treaty of Tlatelolco into effect or to control the flow of small arms we should accept such diverse approaches. If the nuclear superpowers concentrate on implementation and acceleration of START I and II reductions, on fissile material, and on the question of "loose nucs" we should encourage such important steps rather than bury them in calls for more grandiose achievements. A comparable step in South Asia and in the Middle East might involve a freeze on the production of fissile materials. Much of the rest of the world might work toward greater transparency.

We all recognize the principle of sovereign equality, and we must all work toward achieving greater stability and reductions. In many cases, however, insistence on global equality or strict reciprocity is designed to block progress, not promote it. For example, to link the extension of the NPT to external factors such as a CTB, or to argue that all states must reach the same levels of disarmament together is a recipe for disaster.

The NPT extension, without limitation, is in the interest of everyone except those with aspirations to proliferate nuclear weapons. We should let no one, and certainly not non-parties, hold the NPT extension hostage. Indeed, to consider the mere extension of the already existing NPT regime as a measure of our non-proliferation success is a defeatist notion that sets our standards too low.

Thus far, I have highlighted the importance of making clear international norms and of insisting that everyone contribute appropriately using the diverse tools at our disposal for arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping. But I have also made clear that these are tools which deal primarily with the symptoms of insecurity and not the causes.

In the end, regional security concerns will have to be addressed and the political nature of a number of regimes changed before we will have confidence that we have achieved our objectives. In the case of our non-proliferation agenda, the reality is that the knowledge of how to build such weapons is widespread and the technology and industrial base are becoming more widespread. This is already true of CW and BW and will become increasingly true with respect to space launch vehicles and nuclear weapons. Even where we control critical elements such as fissile material, a nation could always build the industrial base and put into place many elements in support of the nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons options ready to implement quickly when it so chooses.

To buy time we must continue to try to control capability, but to be successful we must resolutely deal with intentions. Here too, time is running out. A global high-tech economy is transferring quickly around the world relevant technologies never anticipated when the world first began to deal with biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons. The economic burdens and inefficiencies introduced by export controls in the face of intense commerce in technology will at some point almost inevitably exceed the effectiveness of the controls. We should not tolerate the continuation of a situation in which a few countries' ambitions for weapons of mass destruction force us to make that choice between our security and our prosperity.

Fortunately, our arms control, non-proliferation, and peacekeeping efforts can help address even the question of intentions. You who have been working on the question of verification and confidence-building recognize that our efforts are designed to bring about greater openness. Such openness has already enhanced democratic forces around the world and goes to the heart of the question of intentions. Likewise, our insistence on strict compliance with agreements and the decisions of the United Nations Security Council reinforce the concept of the rule of law both internationally and domestically. The strengthening of international norms on human rights, non-proliferation, and non-aggression, which must be at the center of our policy, will best be implemented by respect for the rule of law everywhere. If we equivocate now on the expansion and enforcement of these standards, we will have lost a great opportunity and will have set the stage for tragedy.

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