



## IN ANTICIPATION OF NEW APPROACHES

***Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War.* Carnegie Moscow Center, Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin, eds. (Moscow: ROSSPEN Russian Political Encyclopedia, 2006).**

*Reviewed by Vladimir Orlov*

Arguments about Iran's nuclear intentions... Six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear program... The U.S.-Indian agreement on nuclear cooperation... The modernization of China's nuclear weapons... Attempts by terrorist organizations to obtain components of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)...

These are today's realities, and they guarantee that "nuclear" news will continue to make headlines in leading newspapers and lead on prime time television broadcasts. However, the constant presence of the "nuclear factor" in the media, which has meant that discussions of this issue—particularly since the search for WMD was chosen as the pretext for the Iraqi military campaign of 2003—have moved from the traditionally narrow sphere of the expert community to a far broader audience, creates a risk that we will lose sight of the big picture and general trends in favor of immediacy.

That is why it is so important that a *comprehensive* analysis of the "nuclear problem" be undertaken right now, in the new, post-bipolar situation. Of course, this analysis must not be abstract or disengaged from current international politics. Nevertheless, it should not be distracted by happenstance and should be consistent, both on questions of the development of nuclear weapons programs and where nuclear nonproliferation issues are concerned.

The authors assembled under the leadership of Alexei Arbatov and Vladimir Dvorkin rise to the ambitious, wide-ranging task they set themselves with brilliance. First, the editors of *Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War* gathered together a group of star authors to work on the monograph. Many of their names have become synonymous in Russian political science with the topics upon which they have written chapters in this book: Elina Kirichenko and export controls, Roland Timerbaev and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Alexander Kalyadin and counterproliferation policy, Vitaly Naumkin and the Middle East, Gennady Evstafiev and Iran, Vasily Mikheev and the Korean Peninsula, Anatoli Diakov and questions about fissile material production, Ekaterina Stepanova and international terrorism... and the list goes on. Readers will easily see for themselves that the editors were able to form a first-rate collection of authors and provide an encompassing picture of the opinions about current (and, to some degree, future) nuclear weapons.

The book is aimed not at newcomers to questions of nonproliferation and nuclear deterrence, but at the well-established expert audience. In this it differs considerably from the other works on nuclear nonproliferation published in Russia to date.

The authors and editors try not to make do with easy answers and not simply to churn out "overviews" on one problem or another or on one region of the world or another, although from the point of view of issue areas and geography the book covers practically all of the "sore points" and includes the broadest—and for the most part accurate and trustworthy—set of factual material that all by itself would make it an irreplaceable reference text for Russia's



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community of experts—alongside such unsurpassed tomes as *Deadly Arsenals*, under the editorship of Joseph Cirincione, which has already been issued in two editions by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest virtue of this monograph is that it *poses questions* and attempts to *propose solutions*.

From my point of view, the key to understanding the “ideology” of the entire monograph is its chapter four (authored by Alexei Arbatov), “The Problems of the Treaty [on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, NPT] and the Nonproliferation Regime,” particularly a section entitled “The Dialectics of the ‘Peaceful’ and ‘Military’ Atom.” At the basis of the NPT, writes the author, there is silence regarding “the premise that the creation of nuclear weapons can be a derivative, or by-product, of the development of peaceful nuclear energy and science. In accordance with this premise, maximum control should be exercised by ‘legitimate’ nuclear powers and international organizations over supplies of nuclear materials and technologies in order to prevent their military use by recipient states. But in reality, with a few exceptions, this can occur. Brazil and Argentina were moving forward in this sphere without a clear understanding of their final aims; all other countries clearly realized and continue to realize that the use to which they intend to put nuclear energy – military or peaceful – is needed in the final analysis.” (p. 143)

The author develops this thesis further, asserting that states like the Netherlands, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Australia did not build nuclear weapons, despite their very high level of scientific, technical, and industrial development in this field and their significant freedom to make use of nuclear materials, not so much because of their membership in the NPT as due to “their confidence in security assurances, which do not depend on treaty norms, or fear of severe international consequences had they created nuclear weapons, which also was not strongly related to the NPT.” (p. 143) States that developed a military component did so, in the opinion of Arbatov, “purposefully, and not ‘alongside’ a peaceful nuclear program. Their motives were not to obtain economic benefits on the side but tasks of an entirely different order, and therefore the promise of economic benefits as a reward for foregoing nuclear weapons, the foundation of the NPT, exerted only weak influence on their policy.” (p. 144)

I believe that this key element in the book will give rise to numerous debates; but I am sympathetic to it.

Another indicative proposition in this book, no doubt, is the assertion that the priorities of the P-5, the “nuclear powers,” differ *substantially*, a fact that, at the very least, “hampers the elaboration of a common policy... on strengthening the NPT and its arrangements...” (p. 153) Moreover, the “tacking” in the policies of the P-5 towards states that are a threat to nonproliferation create great freedom of action for the latter, while antagonizing “law-abiding” nonnuclear NPT member states and undermining their desire actively to cooperate with the leading powers...” (p. 153) The authors provide numerous examples that convincingly illustrate this thesis. Furthermore, they clearly demonstrate that the nuclear policies of most of the (NPT-recognized) nuclear weapon states are moving in completely the opposite direction from the one prescribed in the Treaty and subsequent NPT Review Conference documents; as a result, the tie between Article VI and the other NPT articles has become hopelessly disconnected through the actions of the weapons states themselves, discrediting the effectiveness of the whole nonproliferation regime.

Speaking of current Russian and U.S. nuclear policy, the authors examine the preservation of the “archaic and absurd system of strategic relations” and outline, albeit with a dotted line, the course of a transition to a new strategic relationship, which they call “nuclear partnership.” The authors insist that the time has come to form a “qualitatively new policy both in the sphere of nuclear nonproliferation and in the area of nuclear deterrence.” However, the authors admit that this transition can only occur if there is a significant effort made together with a system of well-thought-out and consistent measures and agreements between the leading states, which requires the political will of their leaders; otherwise, the work’s recommendations may turn out to be nothing more than a list of good wishes and general declarations.

At one point, summing up their trips to nonproliferation’s “sore spots,” the authors cannot keep from Cassandra-like warnings (of global scale): “The next state of proliferation, if it gains

momentum, will not simply lead to an exponential growth in the threat of the use of nuclear weapons, but due to the confluence of numerous risk factors could make the use of nuclear weapons practically unavoidable in the foreseeable future.” (p. 155)

At the same time, the authors are much more cautious in their discussion of the threat of unsanctioned access to nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, and the problem of nuclear terrorism in general. The chapter by Ekaterina Stepanova and Alexander Pikaev—one of the best in the monograph, in which the authors confidently develop their arguments (“Nuclear terrorism is highly unlikely... but several current trends indicate that this situation could change”) on the basis of extensive factual material and do not allow themselves to make the common mistake, whereby issues of WMD terrorism are not examined in the context of the problem of contemporary terrorism as a whole and instead become an object of unscientific political speculation.

The book’s authors are less prepared for the debate in its pages on the changing configuration of the official nuclear club, primarily because India, which apparently found the doors to this “closed club” slammed shut in front of it long ago, is now calmly sitting at the table, nearly as an honored guest; whether this pleases people or not, the reality is that the nuclear club has already expanded from five members to at least six – this is a fact of life that cannot be ignored.

There will surely be arguments about the final section of the book, where it attempts to answer the question *what is to be done* under the current circumstances, on the basis of the rather disquieting diagnosis in the book.

In part (for instance, on the question of denying states that leave the NPT the fruits of their Treaty membership), we have a compressed reproduction or citation of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s 2005 book *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security*,<sup>2</sup> which has received a great wave of responses in the press and a very mixed, to a large degree restrained or skeptical, reaction from the international expert community.

In part, the Russian authors and editors draw utterly independent, clear, and harsh conclusions. “Arbatov and Dvorkin’s ten points” on the need for a new policy in the sphere of nuclear nonproliferation and nuclear deterrence, if it does not shake the world of nonproliferation and disarmament experts, should at the very least draw a great deal of attention to itself; and there is no doubt that these “ten points” will be the starting point for new academic and, it is hoped, practical discussions. 🐘

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Cirincione, Jon Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*, Second Edition, Revised and Expanded (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> George Perkovich, Jessica Tuchman Mathews, Joseph Cirincione, Rose Gottemoeller, and Jon Wolfsthal, *Universal Compliance: A Strategy for Nuclear Security* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment Report, March 2005).

