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from time to time calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Reprint Mailing No. 70.

(Mrs.) Eulah C. Laucks, President
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MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY, February 24, 1985

Illusion on high

WHO'LL buy my wares? Mr Caspar Weinberger has been practising some high-pressure salesmanship in Europe for the Strategic Defence Initiative, the Star Wars system, to which the US administration is now as strongly committed as medieval alchemists ever were to their stones. The US believes that space-based lasers and particle beam projectors can transmute war into peace and, in the President's words, make nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete. But it is illusory to search for absolute security through technical fixes. They are fallible on an earthly level, where heavily guarded industrialists and politicians are the victims of terrorists, and they will be fallible on the astral plane. In Lebanon the US lost its embassy twice and its marine headquarters once through suicidal bombing missions when both the means of aggression (a lorry) and the possible defence (concrete posts) were fairly rudimentary and the risks were known to be high. It cannot seriously expect people to believe that 1,000 or more multi-headed missiles can all be stopped before they reach the United States. The retort is that some defence is better than none, but is that true? If the SDI were to show any signs of being even partially effective the Russians (assuming their aggressive intent) would simply increase the number of missiles, the first salvo of which would presumably be decoys to exhaust their opponent's defensive prowess, alertness, or equipment. Failing that they would diversify their delivery systems into missiles, like the cruise launched from submarines, which were not vulnerable to the defences the US had deployed. In either case the result would be a swiftening of the arms race.

If the SDI were merely a mare's nest from which no harm could come in the pursuit then any opposition to it would be on simple financial grounds. But it is less straightforward than that. If the US believes it can acquire an effective defensive shield it will presumably regard the reduction of offensive weapons as less important. The Americans are undoubtedly being realistic in refusing to believe that nuclear weapons will ever be wholly eliminated or, for a long time, substantially reduced. Nevertheless, the professed aim of arms control is to get down the numbers, which itself would be a cause for confidence in the continuation of the process and eventually could lead to a reassessment for the better of superpower relations. The effect of concentrating on the notion of a defence against nuclear weapons will be to encourage the other side to swamp the defences by building more. That would almost certainly be the American reaction if the Russians announced that they could nullify the American deterrent. Some American apologists for Star Wars liken the project to putting a man on the moon, which eventually proved within the competence of American technology. There is a world of difference between scoring a bull's eye oneself and promising that a thousand others will fail to do so.

U.S.-Soviet space cooperation and arms control

Last October President Reagan signed a resolution pledging to renew cooperative space ventures with the Soviets. A joint exploration of Mars would be an alternative to the popular appeal and technical challenge of Star Wars.

by Spark M. Matsunaga

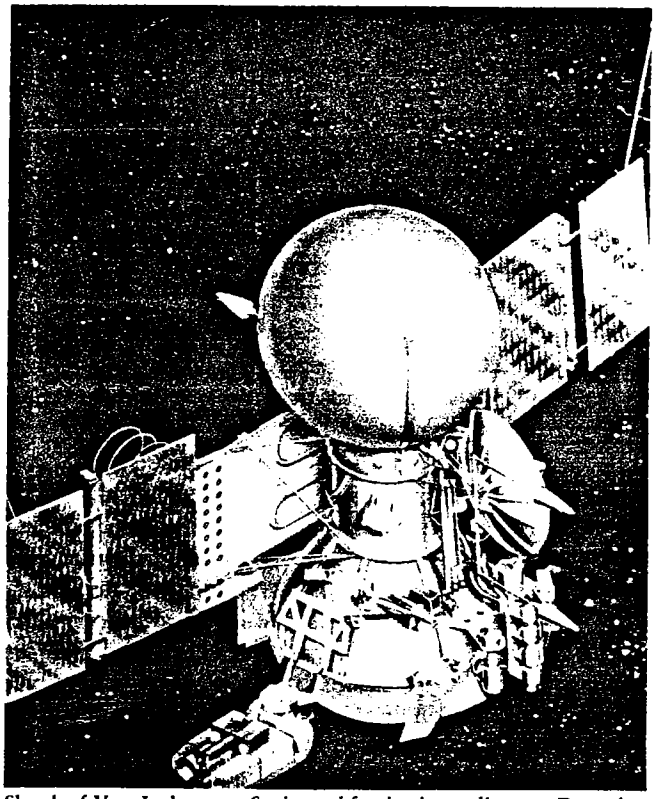
IN THE SUMMER OF 1982, alarmed by reports in specialized journals, I published an article in the *Washington Post* warning that if events continued along their current course, the arms race would literally go into orbit. Even then, space strategists were talking and writing about orbiting laser battle stations. As one means of averting a confrontational evolution in space policy, I proposed that the first permanently manned space platform be an international project. The response from all quarters was revealing.

The Departments of State and Defense, who were sent copies of the article, expressed incredulity that anyone could be considering space weapons. Yes, I was told, space was used profitably by the military for communications, for command and control, and for monitoring arms control agreements. But space weapons? It was suggested that I had succumbed to fantasy. So they saw no need for an international space platform.

Space scientists responded with equal coolness. At the time, the scientific community had lined up against NASA's bid for a permanent space station because they felt it would detract from other projects. Requests for support fell on deaf ears.

My Senate colleagues appeared to accept the prevailing view. When I introduced in September 1982 a resolution that began, "Whereas the United States and the Soviet Union are on a course leading toward an arms race in space that is in the interest of no one," I obtained no cosponsors.

Meanwhile, I had initiated contacts with a number of space scientists. In consultation with them, I introduced a new resolution in February 1983 as Senate Concurrent Resolution 16. In it the space station receded to the background. Instead, the new resolution called for renewal of the U.S.-Soviet space cooperation agreement—initiated by President Nixon and Premier Kosygin in 1972, renewed by Presidents Carter and Brezhnev in 1977, and allowed to lapse by President Reagan in May 1982, in response to the imposition of martial law in Poland. Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, cosponsored the resolution, and there were letters of endorsement from a number of leading space scientists. Despite the president's "Star Wars" speech a few weeks later, when the "fantasy" of space weapons I was trying to avoid was redefined as national policy, the resolution went nowhere.

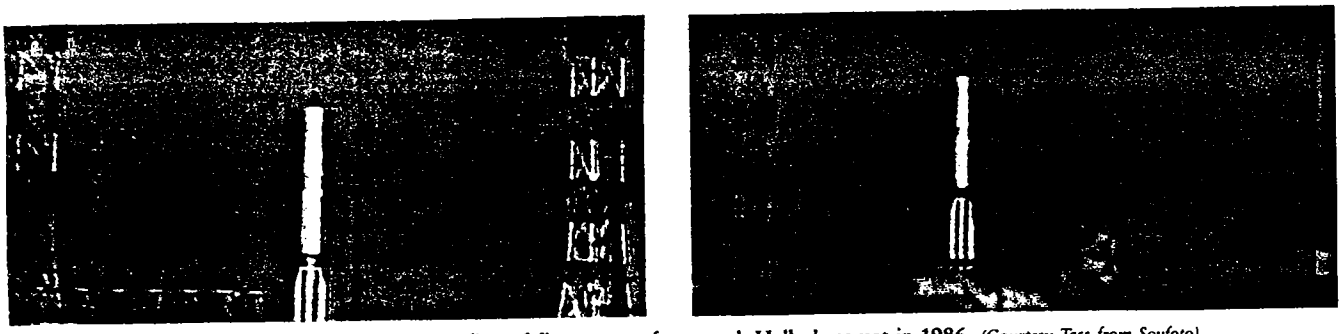


Sketch of Vega I, shown to Soviet and foreign journalists at a December 28 press conference in Moscow. Participation of U.S. scientists in the project was announced on December 20. *(Courtesy Tass from Sovfoto)*

In 1984, we tried again, this time with Senator Charles McC. Mathias of Maryland, a ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, as an original cosponsor. And this time, Senate Joint Resolution 236, "relating to cooperative East-West ventures in space as an alternative to a space arms race," quickly obtained 11 other Senate cosponsors, while a companion measure in the House, introduced by Representative Mel Levine of California, had more than 80 original cosponsors. The idea began to gain currency.

On September 13, 1984 the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on that resolution. Among those submitting testimony were Bernard Burke of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who delivered the impressive

Spark Matsunaga, Democratic senator from Hawaii, has recently introduced legislation aimed at encouraging joint East-West exploration of Mars.



December 15 launch of Vega I, which will be the first of five spacecraft to reach Halley's comet in 1986. *(Courtesy Tass from Sovfoto)*

results of a symposium, sponsored by the Office of Technology Assessment, of 13 eminent space scientists; Harold Masursky of the U.S. Geological Survey; Carl Sagan of Cornell University; Louis Friedman of the Planetary Society; Thomas Donahue of the University of Michigan and chairman of the Space Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences. The scientist-witnesses emphatically disagreed with contentions that an overarching agreement was not necessary for scientific exchanges. For activities of substance, we were told, the Soviets insisted on an agreement. Its absence had made even modest exchanges extraordinarily difficult. (How difficult was demonstrated last December when the Soviets launched two rockets toward Halley's comet with international participation, including U.S. experiments from the Universities of Chicago, Michigan, and Arizona. The U.S. experiments were, in the words of participating scientists, "laundered through the Hungarians and the West Germans." The entire process was pointlessly complex and wasteful of everyone's time and energy.)

The Foreign Relations Committee was impressed by the testimony. After adding minor amendments, the Committee passed the resolution unanimously a few days before Congress's scheduled adjournment. A rapid series of maneuvers that followed freed the measure's counterpart from the House Foreign Affairs Committee, brought the language of both versions into agreement, and culminated in unanimous passage by both Houses. On October 30 President Reagan signed it into law.

Possibilities for space cooperation

This resolution represents, first of all, public commitment by the Administration to change its space policy. In signing it, the president has pledged to renew the U.S.-Soviet space cooperation agreement he had abandoned. As a consequence, the context of debate has changed from *whether* we should cooperate with the Soviets to *how* we should cooperate, and numerous avenues for advancing the issue have been opened. Perhaps even more importantly, the long process leading to passage served an important educational function. Until the resolution was introduced, there was virtually no talk in the Congress or the executive branch about U.S.-Soviet space cooperation, no reflection on its potentialities.

All that has now changed. Space cooperation is advancing as a bipartisan issue with an appeal to a wide range of constituencies. One might even say that it speaks for the emerging space age, for the need to develop new policies and perspectives to meet its transcendent requirements. It addresses the question of what the best means is of meeting the awesome challenge of space exploration. In the process it introduces a new context for considering an issue that has polarized the arms race and efforts to rein it in. Arms buildup and arms control exist symbiotically. The adversaries often find it difficult to consider alternatives to the process to which they are committed.

I obtained a glimpse of how that compulsive commonality affects public perceptions when a woman told me that she favored space cooperation as a substitute for arms control. I had conceived of the two, rather, as complementary. When I suggested that she involve herself in the arms control effort, she said, "I tried, but all arms control people talk about is weapons; that's all that interests them." That may not be true, but we need to pay more attention to such perceptions. The arms buildup-arms control debate requires, perforce, an intense absorption in weapons systems, in their relative merits and demerits. We need to recognize how that approach often turns away many citizens who are deeply committed to the avoidance of nuclear war.

IMPORTANT divergences between arms buildup and arms control occur in the attention paid to negotiations. But even there, potential appeal is lost by the wholly negative context in which arms control is presented. It seeks to block, halt, restrain, bottle up. It is also exclusively committed to abstract verbal argument (show a picture of a non-ASAT; explain how a nonlaser works). When arms controllers activate the emotional and imaginative faculties, they elicit fears of destruction and paint pictures of nuclear devastation. That failure to engage the creative instincts constructively cannot be overemphasized in a nation ruled by a "can-do" spirit.

Star Wars sharply focuses the self-limiting context of arms control argumentation. I am convinced that many of Star Wars' most ardent supporters are genuinely committed to the avoidance of nuclear war. The plan appeals to them through the potential it offers to transcend the increasingly frustrating arms buildup-arms control process, by converting the problem into an exciting technical challenge

compatible with the United States' action-oriented spirit. Arguments that Star Wars won't work—which I find unanswerable—nonetheless encounter a response more fundamental than the arguments themselves: How can we know it won't work if we don't try it? How many times has American scientific and engineering genius achieved the impossible? Star Wars activates culturally based inclinations toward technical challenges on a grand scale. It is something to *do* that the American people can *see*.

Even ardent Star Wars opponents can be pulled into its orbit for lack of an alternative. Last year, the Union of Concerned Scientists sponsored an anti-space-weapons teleconference in which a film aimed at dramatizing the issue supplemented the usual panel discussion. Much of the film consisted of a James Earl Jones voice-over to a pro-Star Wars film prepared by Lieutenant General Daniel O. Graham's High Frontier project. The film employed animated video-game designs to show a Star Wars system in action. The invisible narrator argued that what the viewer was seeing would not work.

Consider the effect of that visual presentation. On the one hand, viewers hear convincing arguments against Star Wars; on the other hand, they see some extremely futuristic and exciting images. Thus, on one level of perception the film promotes the product it seeks to condemn. Put another way, successful transmission of the argument in that context depends not only on the strength of the argument, but also—and too much—on the personality of the recipient. The argument is most likely to succeed with a personality predisposed to assign a dominating role to abstract intellectual argument. In an age of visual media, that excludes a large proportion—if not a majority—of the American population. Such inability to present images—visible objectives—that are its exclusive, creative property can only limit the effort to prevent a space arms race. Star Wars is a vision of our future in space. Only an alternative vision of that future can decisively counter it.

Western scientists join Soviet comet mission

LAST DECEMBER the Soviet Union launched two Vega spacecraft toward a 1986 rendezvous with Halley's comet. Aboard each were instruments built by scientists from various nations, including a comet-dust analyzer invented by University of Chicago physicist John Simpson and funded by the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Aside from the potential scientific benefits of this joint mission, the participation of U.S. scientists is noteworthy because it occurred during a period of particularly high tension in U.S.-Soviet relations.

The collaboration began after Simpson attended a scientific meeting in the Netherlands in September 1983 and described how a comet-dust analyzer developed at the University of Chicago the previous summer could be applied to a mission to Halley's comet. A month later Academician R.Z. Sagdeyev of the Space Research Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences invited Simpson to place such instruments aboard the Vega spacecraft.

"The invitation was totally unexpected," recalled Simpson, noting that the Reagan Administration had cancelled funding for a separate U.S. mission to probe Halley's comet. He added, "This opportunity seemed important not only for its scientific value, but as a demonstration of the cooperative, peaceful space exploration which can be achieved between our two countries."

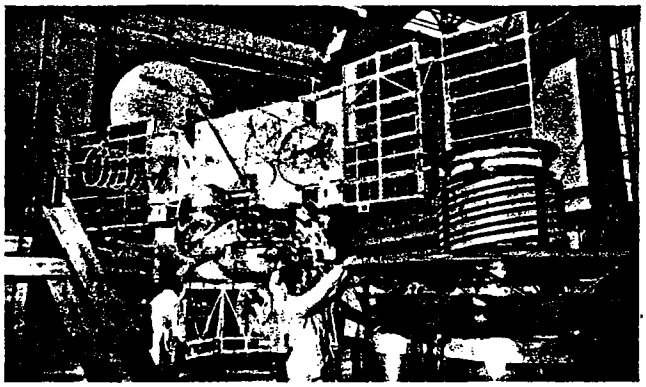
The University of Chicago instruments, each about the size of a shoe box, will measure the mass and intensity of the comet's dust particles as the Vega spacecraft pass by it. The Vega launched December 15 will be the first of five spacecraft, including those sent by Japan and the European Space Agency, to reach Halley. Thus the Chicago findings on dust density will be used to determine the hazards of closer approaches by the following craft.

The new detectors are so sensitive that they can measure dust intensities about 1,000 times higher than instruments previously used and can detect particles as small as one-tenth of a trillionth of a gram in mass. These particles are believed to be samples of matter left over from the formation of the solar system.

Final work on these instruments began in March 1984, after the U.S. scientists had quietly received approval from the Reagan Administration, State Department, Department of Defense, and NASA. The principal work was done by Simpson and two University of Chicago colleagues, Anthony Tuzzolino and senior engineer Murray Perkins.

Due to tense relations between the United States and the Soviet Union and the lack of a formal agreement on the Halley mission, Simpson's group worked closely with scientists from other nations participating in the comet probe, particularly those at the Central Research Institute in Hungary and the Max Planck Institute in Lindau, West Germany. These foreign scientists shared their experience with Vega-type spacecraft and provided data linkages for the U.S. instruments. For example, after the two detectors were built in Chicago, they were shipped to the Max Planck Institute and then sent on to Moscow. Simpson and Perkins went to Moscow in May to check out the prototype, and three flight-qualified instruments, including a spare, were delivered in June, July, and August. A telex "hot line" was established between the Chicago and Moscow laboratories to improve communications while integrating the Chicago instruments into the Soviet spacecraft.

U.S. participation in the Vega probes was made public on December 20 between the launchings of the two crafts. This is the first time Simpson has sent his experiments into space aboard a foreign spacecraft in his more than 25 years of exploration of the solar system—beginning with Pioneer II in 1958. He currently is leading research teams from Canada and several West European countries in construction of solar and cosmic charged-particle instruments for the launch, scheduled for May 1986, of "Solar Polar," the first spacecraft designed to leave the plane of the solar system and fly over the top of the sun. □



Assembly of the Vega probe. Aboard each of the two Soviet spacecraft launched in December was a comet-dust analyzer invented by University of Chicago physicist John Simpson. *(Courtesy Tass from Sovfoto)*

Alternative visions and options

Space cooperation can offer that vision by presenting interconnected abstract arguments and pictorial images with enormous potential for popular appeal. The abstract arguments have to do with the U.S. relationship with the Soviet Union: should it evolve toward obsessively secretive confrontation in space, inviting totalitarian controls, or toward open cooperation, which can only foster democratic values and institutions? The former leads to Star Wars.

As an alternative, I have proposed a program consisting of coordinated space missions of gradually increasing complexity, building toward an international mission to Mars at the turn of the century—the most stirring undertaking in human history. I have offered it less as a substitute for Star Wars than as an alternative policy track, worth pursuing on its own merits, and as a means of opening up new options for policy makers. An East-West Mars program could be initiated today, merely by coordinating already scheduled 1988 (Soviet) and 1990 (U.S.) unmanned scientific missions to Mars, as part of a broader incremental program of cooperation in space. There is so much to do that considerable momentum could be generated without any risk of technology transfer. Each stage would create new cooperative situations in space that might be juxtaposed with confrontational situations, creating new policy options, if not a whole new context for thought and action.

The aftermath of the Apollo-Soyuz mission hints at the possibilities. To some extent the mission seemed like such a deadend because we willed it so. The project director summed up what was probably its most important contribution and what also turned out to be its greatest frustration: "I wish there was another one of these flights. We've gone to all this trouble to learn how to work with these people. . . . I could run another Apollo-Soyuz with a heck of a lot less fuss than it took to get this one going." The mission's principal contribution was the establishment of groundbreaking procedures for cooperation in manned spaceflight, including the successful negotiation of 133 working documents—an unprecedented achievement. In fact, in 1976, shortly after Apollo-Soyuz, the United States signed an agreement with the Soviet Union for a "Shuttle-Salyut Program" and an "International Space Platform." As documents from that era attest, the Soviets then presented concrete plans, but the United States backed off. Ranking U.S. policymakers apparently were not sufficiently interested in space. The United States was also then placing renewed emphasis on "punishing" the Soviets for human rights violations. (In early January of this year, a NASA spokeswoman confirmed that a joint mission of the U.S. space shuttle and the Soviet Salyut space station could take place as soon as late this year.)

Imagine the situation today had we instead pursued an aggressive policy of cooperation. Interest and logic argued for implementation of the 1976 agreement. With the U.S. emphasis on reusable vehicles with short stay times (the space shuttle) and the Soviet emphasis on long-duration space stations (Salyut), the two programs were remarkably complementary. The United States had it in its power to initiate an extraordinary intermingling that, to my mind, would have served as the most telling possible argument against Star Wars schemes in the mid-1980s. What better argument against acts of confrontation than a Shuttle-Salyut program and an international space platform program unfolding on a celestial stage?

In this light, perhaps the weakest aspect of a space arms control movement singlemindedly focused on space weapons or earthbound negotiations is its apparent disinterest in space as a field of constructive action. If nothing else, Star Wars represents something challenging to *do* in space, requiring the application of enormous intelligence and imagination. Many space buffs, especially among the younger generations, are attracted to Star Wars precisely for that reason. But, by the same token, an international Mars program will make a "high-ground" space weapons program look like a much less significant achievement. That kind of juxtaposition awakens a positive response in a vast audience inaccessible to the space arms control movement as it is presently constructed.

Finally, the space environment, in and of itself, represents perhaps the most powerful, but least exploited, argument against a space arms race. Space is *big*—cosmic is no metaphor there. The Soviets make no secret of their intention to send a manned mission to Mars, perhaps as early as the 1990s. Will the United States race them there, then to Jupiter, Pluto, the next galaxy? The requirements of the space age make it possible to *see* the sheer wasteful absurdity of U.S.-Soviet confrontation. Space alone offers an arena, a theme, and an organizing principle that will permit the superpowers to transcend their differences. It even offers the hope of transcending self-regenerating differences of the arms buildup-arms control debate at home while guiding both sides into more satisfying constructive pursuits.

Charles de Gaulle defined politics as the art of exploiting the inevitable. The challenge to policymakers today is to set in motion a process that will permit civilization to reach the point where the saving inevitabilities generated by space take over. It is not so far off. A steadfast policy of space cooperation will take us there. □

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Books & the arts

Dyson on the bomb: high marks

Weapons and Hope
By FREEMAN DYSON
New York: Harper & Row, 1984.
340 pp., $17.95

BRUCE MARTIN RUSSETT

IN THIS BOOK Freeman Dyson tries to bridge the gap between technicians and poets, "warriors" and "victims," those who emphasize the apparent constraints of military realism and those who insist on the demands of human decency. It is not an easy task. People in the two cultures typically reason from axioms so different that they virtually hold others in contempt. Yet Dyson believes—correctly in my opinion—that both hold essential elements of any adequate perception of our human predicament, and that any program for collective life in the nuclear era must combine the practical and the humane. He succeeds well. The book does incorporate compelling elements from various perspectives, and is written in a way that is technically responsible but at the same time literary in style and not technically abstruse. It expounds a "middle way" between contemporary policies of assured destruction and nuclear war-fighting on the one hand, and complete nonviolence on the other. But characterizing the book's ultimate center of gravity as a middle way can be deceptive. Dyson advocates, with passion and good sense, a set of policies that are far removed from those in vogue in the current administration.

Dyson reviews seven concepts that have guided competing actual or proposed nuclear policies. *Assured destruction*, with its threat of massive retaliation against civilian populations, was declared (though not necessarily actual) American policy for much of the nuclear age. He rejects it as grossly disproportionate to any legitimate cause, and simply immoral.

At the same time, he rejects notions of *limited nuclear war*—whether tactical or strategic—as dangerously unrealistic. In this he echoes a widespread agreement among analysts outside the current administration that the chances of limiting any exchange of nuclear weapons once such an exchange has begun are so low as to be virtually nil. As a result he agrees with former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's assessment that nuclear weapons can serve no purpose other than to deter *nuclear* attack, and supports the powerful emerging movement toward a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons. No-first-use would not be just words; it would be implemented by withdrawal of nuclear weapons from exposed border areas and by far-reaching changes in doctrine, training, and deployments, as well as by strengthening nonnuclear (conventional) defenses.

First use of nuclear arms—against conventional attack in Europe, for example—is a threat that must become either less credible as a deterrent, or more dangerous. This strategy was born in the era of overwhelming U.S. nuclear predominance. Now, when that predominance is irretrievably gone, threats deliberately to initiate large-scale nuclear conflict simply are not believable. In practice, the real threat increasingly becomes one that control over nuclear weapons will in fact be lost if ever military hostilities begin, and that we are likely either to find these weapons used by lower-level officers without explicit authorization, or to force pre-emptive use by the other side. Either way, the threat depends on the likelihood that decisionmakers would lose control of military events and be unable to prevent nuclear war even if they wanted to. It stakes the avoidance of Armageddon on a tenuous belief that leaders can always behave rationally—with accurate perceptions, in control of events—to prevent the triggering political event from ever occurring. (Never a revolt in East Germany, or a civil war in Yugoslavia?) The Greeks called that kind of pride hubris.

A third concept, *counterforce*, understood as strikes against the adversary's nuclear retaliatory forces (bombers, land-based missiles and, if possible, submarines), has been the choice of many Soviet military planners as well as a large number of American ones. It rests on a belief—utterly illusory in my view—that by doing so one could reduce the adversary's ability to retaliate down to some "tolerable" level. Pursuit of such a capability, however, carries a high risk of provoking precisely what it is supposed to deter—bringing about an attack by one party to avoid being hit by an anticipated first strike by the other.

With these options, beloved by many policy makers, demolished, Dyson considers four possible alternatives: Nonviolent resistance, nonnuclear resistance, "defense unlimited," and "live and let live." None of these has been fully adopted by a nuclear power, although major elements of the last were part of American (and Soviet?) policy during much of the past two decades.

He rejects *nonviolent resistance* on grounds that, while it may be feasible for some highly cohesive and highly motivat-

BRUCE MARTIN RUSSETT is professor of political science at Yale University, and author most recently of The Prisoners of Insecurity: Nuclear Deterrence, the Arms Race, and Arms Control. *He was the principal consultant to the U.S. Catholic Bishops in the preparation of their Pastoral Letter on War and Peace.*

ed societies, it is unlikely to be so for superpower U.S.A. He also notes, tellingly, that for the American government to adopt such a policy would amount to "vicarious pacifism" with respect to its more exposed allies in Europe and the Middle East. *Nonnuclear resistance* he rejects less speedily and with much more ambivalence. His verdict stems less from a judgment that it would be unworkable in world politics than from a view that it would be unacceptable in American politics—specifically that the military establishment would not tolerate it. If they would, he would.

Other options

"Defense unlimited" reflects the vision of President Reagan's "Star Wars" plan for space-based, high-technology, antiballistic missile (ABM) defense. Dyson, the physicist, rejects it on grounds that it would be provocative, impossible to implement at the high level of confidence and security required, and by necessitating abrogation of the ABM Treaty of 1972 would demolish one of the few remaining achievements of nuclear arms control. But his rejection is limited to that of ABM systems based (as the Star Wars vision is) on using nuclear weapons in some form or other. Nonnuclear ABM would not lead to abandoning the ABM treaty, would be more modest in aim, and would be consistent with Dyson's final, and preferred alternative, "*live and let live.*" This policy consists of substantial reduction in the number of nuclear weapons though not their likely abolition; no first-use and thus creation of adequate conventional defense for Europe and other exposed areas; no "assured destruction" targeting of cities *or* targeting of Soviet strategic nuclear retaliatory forces and thus no deployment of vulnerable first-strike weapons like the MX; and a lower level of political tensions coupled with enhanced nonnuclear defense in forms that might include nonnuclear ABMs.

Dyson's policy prescription is a complex one, and he readily admits its lack of perfection. As an academic might say, there are *no* A papers on this topic; at best some worth a B+ or an A-. On the other hand, there are a lot of D- and F-quality "papers" being produced in high places, and we can do better. I find much good sense in Dyson's proposals, and his preferred option (as least bad out of a set of far from optimal choices) is not far from my own. My most serious reservations concern his fascination with nonnuclear ABM (we have tried so many technological fixes like that so often, with so little enduring success) and his vagueness about what the continuing role of nuclear weapons is to be. He says they should be retained, to deter nuclear attack only, and be "not aimed at anything in particular." This smacks of "possession without intent ever to use," a position that perhaps is emotionally satisfying but which raises a host of difficulties inconsistent with the practical, pragmatic approach Dyson otherwise champions.

Dyson's paper does not rate a straight A either, but it comes in near the top of the class. It contains a great deal of wisdom, good sense for distinguishing the important from the trivial, and is informed by a probing and self-critical morality. His attention to moral issues, in the context of asking what the consequences of morally-motivated action would be, should find sympathetic audience among readers of this magazine. He reminds himself that, "Every soldier who commands nuclear forces, and every civilian strategist who theorizes about them, should, from time to time, imagine himself sitting in the dock at Nuremberg at the end of World War III and preparing his defense." The reminder applies to all of us who take public positions—at whatever point on the hawk-dove spectrum—on this overwhelming political and moral issue of our time. □

The following is quoted from Deadly Gambits, by Strobe Talbott (Knopf, 1984):

"In the Reagan Administration, only when arms control was a political exercise, either within the U.S. or within the alliance, did it capture the President's attention."

NEW OPTIONS

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In-House Critics: Anne Bartley, Claire Collins, Guy Gran, Denise Hamler, Arthur Levine, Michael Marien, Richard Perl, Pamela Plummer, Andrew Schmookler, Judith Schnidman

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Let the people decide

For years, political scientists like Harvard University's Samuel P. Huntington have been telling us we're suffering from "too much democracy." But here's how Benjamin Barber begins his new book, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Univ. of Calif. Press, $17): "We suffer not from too much but from too little democracy . . . [and] what little democracy we have had has been repeatedly compromised by liberal institutions."

Barber is a 45-year-old poli sci prof at Rutgers University, a novelist (*Marriage Voices*, 1981) as well as a prolific non-fiction writer (six scholarly books and anthologies). His new book, part philosophical treatise and part programmatic statement, is nothing less than a scholarly manifesto for decentralist advocates and activists. And it is thoroughly mainstream. He tells us he's presented parts of it "over the years" to colleagues and colloquia at Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Oxford, London School of Economics. An excerpt, printed in *The Atlantic* this summer, led to a lively critical exchange.

Thin vs. strong democracy

According to Barber, there are many kinds of democracy. And some have much better effects on us than others.

Pure democracy—the original kind—was one where "all of the people governed themselves in all public matters all of the time." However, such a form of democracy "could hardly be expected to function efficiently in a nation of continental proportions with millions of citizens."

Representative democracy (aka: liberal democracy) was an attempt to respond to this situation. It's a kind of government where "some of the people, chosen by all, govern in all public matters all of the time." Thus, representative democracy purchased efficiency without sacrificing accountability. But according to Barber, it did so at too great a cost. The isolated voter is no longer crucially responsible to anyone but him- or herself. The decline of democratic participation leads inexorably to the decline of "true citizenship". Thus Barber's pejorative term for representative democracy: "thin democracy."

Not surprisingly, Barber has an alternative, which he calls *strong democracy*. "Strong democracy [is] a form of government in which all of the people govern themselves in at least some public matters at least some of the time. To legislate and to implement laws at least some of the time is to keep alive the meaning and function of citizenship in all of us all of the time." [This formulation was prefigured in books by two post-liberal political philosophers: Robert Theobald, *Beyond Despair*, 1976, and James Ogilvy, *Many Dimensional Man*, 1977. Barber never credits either of them.]

Democracy in action

The first half of *Strong Democracy* is a carefully crafted political-philosophical defense of these assertions. The second half asks, what programs and institutions can help us realize strong democracy? Mercifully, it answers this question without falling victim to the nostalgia for small-scale republics that marginalizes the work of so many other fine radically-democratic thinkers and activists (Bookchin, Illich, Sale).

Here are some of Barber's suggested reforms:

- A national system of **neighborhood assemblies** of 1,000-5,000 citizens each, initially limited to talk and deliberation but eventually having "local legislative competence" as well;
- A national **civic communications cooperative** that would promote civic uses of the new telecommunications technologies;
- Selective experiments in **informal lay justice**;
- A national **initiative and referendum process** on congressional legislation, with a multichoice format and a two-stage voting plan;
- Experimental **electronic balloting**;
- Selective use of a **lottery system** of election for some local political offices;
- Selective experiments with **voucher systems** for schools, public housing and transportation;
- A program of **universal citizen service**, including a military-service option for all;
- Public sponsorship of local **volunteer programs**;
- Public support of experiments in **workplace democracy**.

Strong—or merely thick?

For all its philosophical sophistication, Barber's book is less than fully satisfying.

It says virtually nothing about how to get from here to there, or who might lead the way and why. And it makes one extremely questionable assumption.

It assumes most people want to be involved in governance. But even under Mao, only about 20% of the Chinese involved themselves at any level. Cuba's experience was similar. Castro now defines the political activist as just another personality type—one among many.

If the choice were simply between empowering representatives of the people and empowering most people, I'd have no problem choosing the latter. But the real choice appears to be between rule by the elected and rule by the self-selected. And I'm not convinced a thick melange of trotskyists, New Rightists, paid professional organizers, anti-abortionists, animal rights activists, and what-not (call it "thick democracy"), would look after my interests any better than a representative assembly (Barber's "thin democracy").

But I'm also convinced it's not for professors or journalists to say. A more decentralized America might see some states and communities try Barber's ideas. I look forward to that day.

The following is quoted from "Swallowing Budget Cuts the Easier Way" by Steven Kelman, published in The Wall Street Journal, March 1, 1985, p.16:

"I believe that an important part of what people seek from government is a social statement of their dignity and worthiness. One of the things we do when we provide benefits to veterans is to make a statement as a society that we honor them for the sacrifices they made in service to our country. One of the things we do when we provide benefits to the elderly is to make a statement that we respect the contributions they made to build our society."

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

QUIVERS OF CONSCIENCE

THE KOOL-AID OF HUMAN KINDNESS

Commonweal:

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IN ONE OF Peter DeVries's wonderful novels a man is forced to listen to a writer he cannot abide read a tear-jerking story which is as manipulative as it could be, and yet (as Galileo is said to have said under his breath) it moves! I wish I could offer a citation, chapter and verse, but as I recall it DeVries says of his unwilling listener, "His sneer was strangled on a sob." The DeVries line sums up an aspect of our character which takes up lots of space. There ought to be a word for it. It would not be as simple as hypocrisy, because hypocrisy has come to suggest a degree of conscious self-deception. Self-deception itself is not good enough; too broad. To get at it we need — pay attention now — examples.

It is a common and embarrassing experience to find ourselves moved against our wills. The sentimental movie, the late-night rerun showing a kid with a quivering lip and dead parents, cops with rescued puppies, name it; we love it, in some part of the soul. A few years ago Americans loved pictures of wide-eyed and rather solemn-looking children, the kitschiest of them all showed John-John Kennedy saluting his father's coffin. Apparently a similar sort of sentimental art is popular in Iran, where pictures of young weeping women are popular.

Far be it from me to complain about being an easy touch for these things; I'm the sort of person who can cry every time Old Yaller dies. But I wonder what it means. I know from personal experience that it has nothing to do with being a decent human being. I think all it proves is that I am not dead yet. A pin could do the same thing, but wouldn't return the ego-satisfying dividends. We would like to think that being moved this way proves that we are compassionate people; if we can be moved to tears by something certifiably sad, we must have a heart after all.

To interpret this quiver of consciousness — a little like the experiments Galvani did when he ran electricity into severed frog legs and made them jerk — as a sign of decency is obscene. It is said that Hitler cried at the death of his canary. I think we tend to use this reaction to keep ourselves from becoming aware of how truly stony-hearted we are. It is certainly less costly to be moved to tears than to be moved to action. Our teariness at the appropriate moments is a matter of convention, an observance of a piety upon which everyone agrees. It is an emotional token, advanced across the board to show that we are basically decent and sensitive people.

During the Christmas season these tokens are waved all over the place. Newspapers run campaigns to raise money for the "neediest" (there is something Victorian about the sound of that word), and assistance finds its way to people who are apparently invisible the rest of the year. In my home town the local paper (generally right-wing and more or less quiet about what goes on in the state captial, which wouldn't be so bad if the state capital didn't happen to be here) calls its annual "be nice" campaign "Friend-in-Need." Fletcher Farrar, Jr., editor of *Illinois Times*, a local alternative weekly, has made the important point that the local daily's editorial page ordinarily does everything it can to discourage any governmentally-sponsored measure which might help the poor.

– It's a little like the old joke, "A friend in need is a pest" . . . except at Christmas, when he gives us an opportunity to act like Scrooge running out for a goose. We put from our minds the fact that we will probably try to find a way to tax the goose-bones the day after the end of the holiday season. At times like this, or at any of the other times when we are moved to what we think of as compassion, we take our sensitivity as something which all by itself validates us as moral people. The homeless and hungry and handicapped go back to being nameless spongers once more, when the Christmas season is over. No matter — the tears we shed then show that we really do care, we aren't such bad folk after all, we can think well of ourselves.

This moral tokenism isn't confined to our seasonal self-contradictions. People live by such tokens all year round, form friendships around them, look for the latest variations on the theme, "what belief makes me decent?" It is like a form of war-paint at parties where people don't know one another very well: above their heads, in comic-strip balloons, you can read "Mahler; Updike; Gary Hart; too-bad-about-starving-Ethiopians; I miss the style of the forties." He's talking to "I still get mad about Watergate; what they are doing in Afghanistan is awful; Howard Hawkes and Hitchcock are my favorite directors; I would never buy war-toys for my children." You can tell fairly quickly whom you will be able to talk with next time without having your own tokens shoved aside too rudely; you can find out whom to approach for help during the next political campaign; and whom to avoid. That shorthand may be useful in its way, but we talk and think this way for another and less obvious reason. Having the right opinion somehow makes us good. We take our own opinions as proof of our moral righteousness.

There seems to be a human need to identify the self — or whatever it is that we come to identify as the self — with something larger. The self is itself frequently no more than a bag of disparate reactions. But outrage over the "right" things or the "wrong" things makes us real; so does political or moral or religious passion applied in any direction. This process of identifying ourselves with the right passion is made easy with simplification — better the bumper sticker or button or subscription to the right magazine than the more difficult work of thought and (God forbid) any self-doubt about the issue or range of issues at hand. There are appeals made to us, through carefully bought mailing lists, which pose us against all the others — "the others" being those people who are bigoted, racist, unenlightened, narrow. Unlike us, in other words. This ought to

disturb us. Instead, it makes us feel good. We enjoy the distance, the little lift we get when we see the neighbor's bumper sticker and thank God we didn't vote that way.

Our sick status is this: we love all the tokens which make us different from our neighbor. Or rather, not from our neighbor but from the wrong sort of neighbor — the one whose opinion or set of opinions shows him to have the wrong war paint, the unacceptable perspective. I have had a lot of advertisements mailed to me, for magazines and political causes, which had as their main appeal the notion that by responding I could prove myself different. The difference had to do with sophistication and political enlightenment. But what sort of enlightenment is it that depends on maintaining a distance between oneself and the other, the fool out there? By responding to that appeal to my worst sympathies, don't I come close to answering — in a way which ought to terrify me — the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

JOHN GARVEY

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LAUCKS FOUNDATION, INC.
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FIRST CLASS MAIL

MARY LAUCKS
3815 42nd AVE. N.E.
SEATTLE, WA. 98105