

Chapter Two: The Development of Counterproliferation Policy

The defense programs for counterproliferation come into play when non-proliferation controls fail and U.S. forces face NBC-armed enemies. Much of the program is concerned with defensive elements like the protection of U.S. forces from chemical or biological agents. The United States also pursues programs to develop military capabilities for the destruction of enemy NBC weapons, their means of delivery and hardened, deeply buried production or storage facilities. This policy, stemming from concerns that arose during the Gulf War, has a much longer history in military thinking.

The concepts contained in the counterproliferation initiative that Secretary of Defense Aspin announced in December 1993 were not new. Rather, they were grounded in policy debates and proposals, as well as military practices, that are older than nuclear weapons.

COUNTERPROLIFERATION SINCE WORLD WAR II²⁶

Although counterproliferation was only named in 1993, the concept has existed since before the

nuclear age began. This is not surprising, since it is entirely logical for one country at war to wish to destroy the most powerful weapons available to their enemy. Counterproliferation is, from the military perspective, a perfectly sensible policy. There are only a few examples of counterproliferation missions in past history, although they are significant. During World War II, the allies targeted both Japanese and German nuclear weapons facilities to impede development of nuclear weapons by those two nations.

The first case is well known through the film *The Heroes of Telemark*, starring Kirk Douglas. The Allies made repeated attempts to destroy German facilities from 1941 on. One important target was the heavy water production plant, Norsk-Hydro, at Vemork, Norway. Attempted sabotage missions and bombing raids caused little damage to the plant, but the German occupiers decided to transfer the heavy water held there to Germany. Six hundred tons of heavy water were subsequently destroyed when a Norwegian saboteur sank the ferry moving the heavy water. However, the allies were uncertain that the German program had been

²⁶ Much of the information in this section comes from Schneider, Barry, *Future War and Counterproliferation*, "Counterforce Attack Decisions: Seven Cases," Praeger Publishers, 1999, pp. 148-157.

fatally damaged, and continued to attack suspected research facilities until the end of the war.

While Japan did not pursue a serious nuclear program after 1943, convinced that they (and, by their calculations, anybody else) were unable to construct a bomb before the end of the war, Japan was also the target of counterproliferation attack missions. These attacks were prompted by fears that nuclear weapons research in Japan had continued. Japan's research cyclotron at the Riken research institute was destroyed by bombing in April 1945.²⁷

Since they took place during a declared war, and within the accepted laws of war, neither of these examples excited any particular controversy. This is also the case for the attacks that took place during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. Iran attempted to destroy the Osirak reactor in September 1980, and Iraq destroyed the Iranian reactor at Bushehr in attacks in 1985 and 1987. These attacks again fall within the boundaries of normal wartime actions.

A final non-controversial example of a counterproliferation mission concerns the destruction of Scud missiles and launchers in Iraq during the first Gulf War. Coalition air forces and special forces on the ground combined for the now famous 'Scud hunt.'

Very different was the Israeli attack that actually destroyed the Osirak reactor on June 7, 1981. Israeli intelligence had become convinced that Iraq was, or soon would be, producing nuclear weapons at the reactor. The attack was a preventive strike, designed to stop the Iraqi weapons program in its tracks. It failed, although it did delay that program significantly. Importantly for the discussion in this paper, the attack was a preventive strike outside time of war. It was also conducted against a Non-Proliferation Treaty member state. There was little or no support for

Israel after the attack. In fact, the attack was even condemned by the UN Security Council, despite arguments that the strike was in self-defense and justified under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Resolution 487 (1981) not only 'strongly condemns' the attack, but states that it is "...a serious threat to the entire safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is the foundation of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty."²⁸ This example of a counterproliferation mission exemplifies all that is controversial about the new policies and doctrines adopted by the United States.

A Long History of Proposed Nuclear Use in Counterproliferation

Also deeply controversial is the role assigned to nuclear weapons in counterproliferation doctrine and the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy*. That role, however, is well rooted in debates that go back to the 1940s. U.S. military planners have thought of nuclear weapons as weapons of war since General Leslie R. Groves, ran the Manhattan Project, which developed and built the very first nuclear weapons. Particularly they have viewed them as weapons that should be used in missions that today would be described as counterproliferation missions, because of their unique military effectiveness. In October 1945, General Groves said:

If we were truly realistic instead of idealistic, as we appear to be, we would not permit any foreign power with which we are not firmly allied, and in which we do not have absolute confidence, to make or possess atomic weapons. If such a country started to make atomic weapons we would destroy its capacity to make them before it has progressed far enough to threaten us.²⁹

²⁷ For a more detailed account of the Japanese nuclear program and counterproliferation attacks against it by the United States see Rhodes, Richard, *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*, Simon and Schuster, 1986.

²⁸ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 487 (1981), June 19, 1981.

²⁹ Groves, General Leslie R., October 1945. The author is indebted to Professor Sir Joseph Rotblat for bringing this quote to his attention.

Only two years later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff concurred, writing in a report that:

(4) That legislation be enacted by the Congress **establishing new definitions of acts of aggression and incipient attack, including the readying of atomic weapons against us.** This legislation should make it **the duty of the President of the United States,** as Commander in Chief of its Armed Forces after consultation with the Cabinet, to order atomic bomb retaliation when such retaliation is necessary **to prevent or frustrate an atomic weapon attack upon us.**³⁰
[Author's Emphasis]

Despite the use of the word retaliation, it is clear that this document envisages a preemptive or preventive attack by the United States. There was a lively debate in the United States in the 1940s on the wisdom or otherwise of a preventive war against the Soviet Union. That debate was resolved in opposition to preemptive nuclear attacks, which in any case became impossible after the Soviet Union detonated its own nuclear bomb in 1949. However, it is clear that the concept of counterproliferation and the use of nuclear weapons in counterproliferation missions have been an integral part of debates about the military utility of those weapons since the earliest days of the nuclear age. President Bush has now put this debate front and center.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DEFENSE COUNTERPROLIFERATION INITIATIVE

The Defense Counterproliferation Initiative was launched by then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin,

following President Clinton's issuing of Presidential Decision Directive 18 on counterproliferation in December 1993. On December 7, 1993, Aspin told the National Academy of Sciences that there were five main points to the Counterproliferation Initiative:

- Recognizing that this is a new mission, not the old Cold War mission;
- Tailoring new U.S. weapons to destroy weapons of mass destruction;
- Re-examining the strategies used against the new kind of threat;
- Focusing intelligence efforts on detecting weapons of mass destruction;
- Ensuring international cooperation in curbing the threat of such weapons.³¹

Secretary Aspin's initiative was implemented beginning in 1994, with the Deutch report³² that created a DoD counterproliferation policy. In the same year, Congress passed legislation combining the various programs relating to passive defenses against chemical and biological weapons. In the following years the DoD continued their efforts to operationalize this policy, establishing common definitions, setting up command structures and responsibilities for implementing the policy and putting necessary infrastructure into place. These policies have put the United States somewhat at odds with European and other al-

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³⁰ Section Two – RECOMMENDATIONS, The Evaluation of the Atomic Bomb as a Military Weapon, *The Final Report of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board for Operation Crossroads*, June 30, 1947, p. 14.

³¹ Quoted in a fact sheet on PDD 18 at the website of the Federation of the American Scientists: www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd18.htm, available on June 29, 2003.

³² The official name of the Deutch Report is the *Report on Nonproliferation and Counterproliferation Activities and Programs*, Office of the Deputy Secretary of Defense, May 1994.

lies, who prefer to place a much stronger emphasis on deterring attack and on traditional diplomatic instruments to prevent proliferation.

Within DoD, the point agency for counterproliferation programs is the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), which was established in 1998. Activities across a number of agencies have been overseen since 1994 by the Counterproliferation Program Review Committee (CPRC), chaired by the Secretary of Defense. CPRC has established Areas for Capability Enhancement (ACEs) to guide its program review process. These are based on the Counterproliferation Requirements established by the Pentagon.

The final part of this process — the adoption of a formal counterproliferation doctrine — is now underway, with the United States Air Force (USAF) taking the lead. Expected to be finished by the summer of 2003, JP 3-40 Joint Doctrine for Counterproliferation Operations will “address the integration of four ‘core capabilities’ — counterforce, active defense, passive defense and consequence management.”³³ This comprehensive organization of counterproliferation within DoD laid the groundwork for the Bush administration’s placing of counterproliferation at the heart of national security strategy.

UNILATERALISM AND PREEMPTION: COUNTERPROLIFERATION IN THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE UNITED STATES

On September 20, 2002, the Bush administration published a 38-page document titled, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. This document, required of all Presidential administrations by the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986, is the first document produced by the Bush administration outlining its comprehensive approach to national security and foreign affairs. The strategy put forth is radical in its prescription

for a preemptive use of force in handling NBC weapons proliferation. As the *New York Times* headline said “Bush Outlines Doctrine of Striking Foes First.”³⁴ It is further unusual in its rhetoric of American military dominance as a permanent operating strategy for U.S. foreign affairs. Particularly troubling in this context of preemption and military dominance are the document’s unilateral overtones and previous allusions by the administration to the use of tactical nuclear weapons in preemptive strikes.

The adoption of the dangerous concept of preventive war, matched with a pervasive preemption through the security strategy, is an unprecedented move by the United States. It distances the Bush administration’s national security policy from all before it. President Bush claims the need for such a strategy is due to the nature of the threats facing the United States in a strategic environment wrought with terrorism. This new strategy, however, is at least partly motivated by the administration’s aim to maintain U.S. military dominance in the future, but seems to carry inherent dangers. An example is, the case of Iraq, where the United States waged a self-proclaimed war for disarmament, and has failed to uncover the NBC weapons that the so-despised UN inspection teams had not found. In this failure, some of the dangers of a preventive or preemptive policy to combat NBC weapons already has been demonstrated. The U.S. will find it much harder to attract allies for the next war.

The Clinton Administration’s National Security Strategy

Following along the nuclear security path forged by all U.S. presidents of the Cold War era, President Bill Clinton’s 1999 *National Security Strategy* (NSS) focused on a combination of non-proliferation efforts and military capabilities, including nuclear forces. The 1999 NSS emphasized the U.S. commitment to such non-proliferation ef-

³³ Counterproliferation Program Review Committee, *Report on Activities and Programs for Countering Proliferation and NBC Terrorism*, Executive Summary, May 2002, p. 7.

³⁴ Sanger, David E., “Bush Outlines Doctrine of Striking Foes First,” *The New York Times*, September 20, 2002.

forts as the START Treaties to reduce both U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals; the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty to limit deployments of missile defenses in Russia and the United States; the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to refrain from all nuclear explosive testing; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states; and the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program to strengthen controls over weapons-usable fissile material and prevent the theft or diversion of NBC weapons and all related technology from the former Soviet Union.³⁵ This contrasts with the Bush administration agenda, which has de-emphasized and de-funded many of these items.

In addition to these non-proliferation efforts, President Clinton focused heavily on deterrence as a means of providing security for the United States. Noting that U.S. credibility in upholding its security commitments (including forward deployments to protect our allies and our demonstrated ability to form and lead effective military coalitions) is a key element in the maintenance of a credible U.S. deterrent, Clinton went on to say that the strategic nuclear arsenal is a crucial element of U.S. non-proliferation and deterrence strategy:

Nuclear weapons serve as a guarantee of our security commitments to allies and a disincentive to those who would contemplate developing or otherwise acquiring their own nuclear weapons. Our military planning is focused on deterring a nuclear war and emphasizes the survivability of our nuclear systems and infrastructure necessary to endure a preemptive attack and still respond at overwhelming levels. The United States will continue to maintain a robust triad of strategic nuclear forces sufficient to deter any potential ad-

versaries who may have or seek access to nuclear forces — to convince them that seeking a nuclear advantage or resorting to nuclear weapons would be futile.³⁶

The Clinton administration, like so many before it, believed that the best means of ensuring the security of the United States against NBC weapons was through continuing deterrence and strengthening multilateral non-proliferation regimes. This is not to say that deterrence was flawless; indeed, it looks better in retrospect than it did during the Cold War: “The superpowers came to it by default, as the best of a bad lot of choices. It came close to failing more than once, and its failure might have meant something akin to the end of the world.”³⁷ Nor is it to say that the Clinton administration wholly eschewed a role for nuclear forces in counterproliferation. As shown in Chapter Four, nuclear use was possible under the Clinton version of counterproliferation. However, any military option in Clinton doctrine was far less likely than with the current policies. However flawed, President Clinton recognized that seeking to reduce and eliminate threats through multilateral negotiations is a policy more likely to keep America safe than one which relies on military efforts to defeat threats as they become a serious challenge to U.S. security.

The Essence of the Bush Doctrine

President George W. Bush’s administration has moved away from the deterrent strategies of Clinton and his predecessors. Rather than aiming to deny enemy access to NBC weapons and dissuading attacks through the threat of massive retaliation, Bush’s approach to the proliferation of NBC weapons entails seeking out and destroying suspected stores of enemy NBC weapons before they can be used against us. This is explicitly stated in *The National Security Strategy*:

³⁵ *National Security Strategy For a New Century*, 1999, Section II.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁷ Hertzberg, Hendrik, “Manifesto,” *The New Yorker*, October 14, 2002.

...as a matter of common sense and self-defense. America will act against such emerging threats before they are fully formed. We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. So we must be prepared to defeat our enemies' plans, using the best intelligence and proceeding with deliberation. History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.³⁸

Rather than subscribing to "the relatively uncontroversial concept of true preemption — striking first against **an imminent, specific, near certain attack**," President Bush focuses on the broader concept of striking first to prevent the mere possibility of such an attack occurring over the long-term (emphasis added). Although

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the President refers to it as a preemptive strategy throughout the document itself, critics have deemed this more a strategy of "preventive war" than of preemption.³⁹

The stated goal of this preventive/preemptive strategy (emphasized in the *National Strategy to Combat WMD*) is to protect the United States and its allies from NBC weapons attack by "rogue" states and terrorist organizations. However, the NSS also asserts that preemption, along with the build-up of the U.S. military, will serve to "dissuade future military competition," leaving the United States as the unquestioned sole superpower.⁴⁰ Deterrence is changing. It is coming to mean the deterring of any adversary from acquiring NBC weapons, not

deterring those that have them from using them. In other words, the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy* is designed not only to protect the United States from potential NBC weapons attack, but is also (and more controversially) a permanent strategy to eliminate any future competitors seeking to challenge U.S. dominance on the world scene. Indeed, as Hendrik Hertzberg points out:

This goes much further than the notion of America as the policeman of the world. It's the notion of America as both the policeman and the legislator of the world, and it's where the Bush vision goes seriously, even chillingly, wrong.⁴¹

Some members of the European Union view the document's message as a U.S. declaration that, "This is an empire and we will not allow anybody to get close to our capabilities and we are ready to act to prevent that from happening."⁴² The doctrine of dominance, inherent in the Bush administration's *National Security Strategy*, and the unfolding events in Iraq have stimulated an academic and, in the wake of the war with Iraq, a media debate on the nature of American power and the new imperialism of the United States.

The doctrine of military dominance through preemptive attacks is made less acceptable to international opinion by assertions of a U.S. right to act outside global institutions. Although President Bush explicitly states that his strategy is a multilateral one focused on building new alliances and strengthening old ones, he also adds:

While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, **we will not hesitate**

³⁸ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002.

³⁹ *The Bush National Security Strategy: A First Step*, Center for Defense Information, available June 4, 2003 at <http://www.cdi.org/national-security-strategy/washington.cfm>.

⁴⁰ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁴¹ Hertzberg, *op. cit.*

⁴² Frankel, Glenn, "New U.S. Doctrine Worries Europeans," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 2002.

to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country [emphasis added].⁴³

THE IMPLICATIONS OF PRESIDENT BUSH'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR U.S. AND GLOBAL SECURITY

This strategy of preemption is unprecedented in American history and carries significant risks. For one thing, a preemptive strategy that aims to hit suspected stores of NBC weapons has a high possibility of eroding U.S. credibility. If the United States mistargets an NBC weapons site and instead kills innocent civilians, the international community will have little reason to trust U.S. estimates of suspected NBC weapons sites even when they are completely accurate. Such an act would also be rightly condemned by the world as immoral, and possibly even illegal under international law. Such mistargeting is very likely to happen, given the potential for wrongful targeting during even non-preemptive military operations when the targets are more clearly identified. Furthermore, it is rarely certain that the possessor of NBC weapons really intends to use them against the United States or its allies, and thus any preemptive strategy carries the danger of eroding U.S. credibility. Just as the United States relied for so many years on its strategic nuclear arsenal to provide a strong deterrent posture, so a "rogue" state may possess NBC weapons to enhance its own security with a credible deterrent in a regional or global context.

Secondly, the President's preemptive strategy is inherently dangerous in terms of its implications for tactical nuclear use. Although not explicitly stated in the *National Security Strategy*, the allusions to nuclear use inherent in this preemptive strategy speak to the danger of nuclear war made increasingly possible by the Bush administration's plans. These allusions are even clearer in the *National Strategy to Combat WMD*,

and explicit in the classified version of that paper *National Security Presidential Directive 17*. (See the next section.)

On that same note, unilateral preemptive action by the United States will set a precedent for other states to follow. This is perhaps the most dangerous consequence of preemptive U.S. action, for it opens the door for any state to unilaterally and preemptively target its enemies, possibly even with nuclear weapons. The United States could well be one such target, yet the Bush administration fails to address these possible consequences of its preemptive policy. Multilateral institutions have existed for decades to protect against any state targeting another in a preemptive and unreasonable way: if preemption is indeed necessary, the support of the United Nations or even simply a large number of nations carries with it a certain degree of credibility and reasonableness. However, the combination of preemption and unilateralism evident in Bush's strategy indicates a global security crisis unlike any seen in the international arena in recent decades.

The international reaction to Bush's *National Security Strategy* has, for the most part, either recognized the perilous international security implications of the document, or followed the precedent set by the United States (in accordance with the above prediction). Russia's reaction was to immediately cite the document to justify preemptive strikes against Chechen rebels in Georgia, thus reinforcing the argument that this policy sets a dangerous precedent for others to follow.⁴⁴ Germany and most of the European Union, however, see Bush's strategy as a unilateral rejection of the multilateral institutions in which they participate with the United States. Furthermore, they believe that the Bush administration has adopted a militarized foreign policy, dividing the world too simply into friends and enemies, and they recognize the danger the document poses in setting a precedent for other countries:

⁴³ *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, op. cit., p. 6.

⁴⁴ Roth, Bennett, "Bush Outlines Strike Policy," *The Monterey County Herald*, September 21, 2002.

...if it is all right for the United States to attack another country preemptively for supporting terrorism, then what is to prevent India from dropping a nuclear bomb on Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, in retaliation for Pakistani support for separatists in Kashmir?⁴⁵

China similarly recognizes inherent dangers in Bush's national security strategy, but its concerns focus more on the possible ramifications of the policy in specified areas, namely North Korea and Taiwan. Because North Korea is mentioned in *The National Security Strategy* as a major NBC weapons producer, the Chinese believe that the United States may preemptively target North Korea sometime in the relatively near future. The ever-present possibility of a U.S.-Chinese conflict over Taiwan further exacerbates China's anxiety about this new strategy, specifically in terms of its re-statement of "U.S. commitments to the self-defense of Taiwan."⁴⁶

Although China and the European powers look at the preemptive implications of this document in a different light, it is clear nonetheless that many states are uncomfortable with the document's preemptive doctrine, not to mention its call for unfettered and unchallenged U.S. military dominance. These concerns are not unwarranted:

If the Europeans are a little alarmed, it's not because of their own military insignificance, or because they're a bunch of weak-wristed, spineless wimps who resent the sight of somebody strong, tough, and decisive. It's because, from Napoleon through Stalin and beyond, a century and a half of blood-soaked history taught them that untrammelled national power seldom ends by reaching a salutary balance.⁴⁷

The lack of international support for Bush's preemptive strategy means that it poses diplomatic problems that will eventually increase its security dangers.

THE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The final chapter in a year of significant national security papers, the *National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* was released on December 11, 2002. It expands upon the policies laid out in the *National Security Strategy*. This short document is an unclassified version of *National Security Presidential Directive 17 (NSPD17)*, which was approved by President Bush in September 2002. The tone of the *National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* is set by the quote used to open it:

The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination.

The United States will not allow these efforts to succeed. ...History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action.⁴⁸

The *National Strategy* establishes the administration view of the threat, and then lays out their plans to combat that threat, asserting that rogue states and terrorists are ready and willing to use NBC weapons not as "...weapons of last resort, but militarily useful weapons of choice intended to overcome our nation's advantages in conven-

⁴⁵ Frankel, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ *National Security Strategy, op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Hertzberg, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸ Introduction, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 2002.

tional forces and to deter us from responding to aggression against our friends and allies in regions of vital interest. In addition, terrorist groups are seeking to acquire WMD with the stated purpose of killing large numbers of our people...⁴⁹

This assertion is controversial. As shown in Chapter One, there is little or no evidence that countries named in the NPR as targets for U.S. counterproliferation nuclear strikes, such as Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Libya or Syria, actually possess NBC weapons in a form that could be used to attack the United States. There is no evidence that they are prepared to use them to attack the U.S. This assertion is dangerous as it forms the basis for an aggressive policy of action (to use the President's word) that is a radical departure from prior policy. It has already been used to justify the invasion of Iraq.

According to this administration, proliferation is no longer a potential threat and a political problem, but it is now an actual military threat that demands a primarily military response. This assertion is questionable at best, and flies in the face of the arguments elaborated in Chapter One. Proliferation has been well contained by the non-proliferation and arms control regime, and what is needed is discussion of how the international community can resolve the few, serious problems that remain. Counterproliferation as configured by the Bush administration has little to offer in this process. Despite this, the first pillar of the Bush strategy to confront proliferation is counterproliferation.

Preventing WMD Use

The possession and increased likelihood of use of WMD by hostile states and terrorists are realities of the contemporary security environment. It is therefore critical that the U.S. military and appropriate civilian agencies be prepared to deter and defend against the full range of possible

WMD employment scenarios. We will ensure that all needed capabilities to combat WMD are fully integrated into the emerging defense transformation plan and into our homeland security posture. Counterproliferation will also be fully integrated into the basic doctrine, training, and equipping of all forces, in order to ensure that they can sustain operations to decisively defeat WMD-armed adversaries.⁵⁰

Proliferation has been upgraded by the administration to the status of the central threat to the United States. In response, counterproliferation has moved from being a support for non-proliferation to being the central plank of U.S. military strategy. Ironically, since the *National Strategy to Combat WMD* is critical of some states for the willingness to use NBC weapons, it also countenances the use of nuclear weapons by the United States for counterproliferation missions, stating that:

We know from experience that we cannot always be successful in preventing and containing the proliferation of WMD to hostile states and terrorists. Therefore, U.S. military and appropriate civilian agencies must possess the full range of operational capabilities to counter the threat and use of WMD by states and terrorists against the United States, our military forces, and friends and allies.⁵¹

However, while those familiar with the language of such documents would know that the "full range of operational capabilities" includes the use of nuclear weapons. The classified version of this strategy, *NSPD17*, is more explicit. According to a report in the *Washington Times*, this document states that:

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

The United States will continue to make clear that it reserves the right to respond with overwhelming force — including potentially nuclear weapons — to the use of [weapons of mass destruction] against the United States, our forces abroad, and friends and allies.⁵²

As mentioned earlier, the *National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* is the declassified version of Top Secret *NSPD 17*, (also known as Homeland Security Presidential Directive 4). This WMD strategy is a dramatic extension of the policy of counterproliferation, and gives a far greater role than in the past to nuclear weapons within that strategy. To add to this controversy is the adoption of the possibility of preemptive attack as a means of defense:

Because deterrence may not succeed, and because of the potentially devastating consequences of WMD use against our forces and civilian population, U.S. military forces and appropriate civilian agencies must have the capability to defend against WMD-armed adversaries, including in appropriate cases through preemptive measures. This requires capabilities to detect and destroy an adversary's WMD assets before these weapons are used.⁵³

The United States may, under certain circumstances, launch a nuclear strike to prevent another state, or non-state group, using NBC weapons. While WMD strategy contains some recommendations for what it describes as strengthening non-proliferation diplomacy, these are not significant. Previous unequivocal support for the concept of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) is now translated in support for an FMCT that “advances U.S. national security interests.” No explanation of the change is given. This support for non-proliferation must be balanced against the administration’s withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, withdrawal of support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the end of the START process in favor of the infinitely flexible and ultimately empty SORT Treaty, and their failure to support the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference despite lip service to the Treaty itself.

In short, counterproliferation is the totality of this administration’s strategy to combat proliferation and, as the President says “the only path to peace and security is the path of action.”⁵⁴ The readiness of the United States to use nuclear weapons in pursuit of this policy is a radical new element of military strategy that even U.S. allies find hard to accept, and impossible to support.

⁵² Kravev, Nicholas, “Bush Approves Nuclear Response,” *Washington Times*, January 31, 2003.

⁵³ *The National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, December 17, 2002, p. 3.

⁵⁴ Introduction, *The National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, December 17, 2002.