

Security for All in the Nuclear Age

Anatoly A. Gromyko

Director, Institute of Africa Studies; Professor and Member of Committee of Soviet Scientists for Peace against the Nuclear Threat. Dr. Gromyko is a Corresponding Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He is the author of over 200 papers and books, including *New Thinking in the Nuclear Age*, coauthored with Vladimir Lomeiko, which reflects the spread in the USSR of the philosophy of new thinking.

If I were to put the meaning of new political thinking in a nutshell, I'd say it stands for a process in which we ought to recognize each other's humanity, as we move to solve today's complex problems dealing with political relations, economics, and social life.

Some will dismiss this move as utopian thinking and claim that even if we see our opponent's humanity, he will not necessarily see the humanity in us. After all, during past scholarly debates a favorite argument always has been that opponents never previously in history have paid much attention to each other's humanity, that other motives always guide politicians in their day-to-day activities.

But I ask: When in human history, other than now, have we had such clear evidence, devoid of question, showing that we humans have arrived at a limit? If we move beyond it, our continued survival on this planet is imperiled. Does not this extraordinary situation we all face dictate equally uncommon solutions that transcend our usual points of view?

New Thinking and New Politics

We all live on the same planet Earth, our common home. No matter how widely we differ in our understanding of what is good and what is just, and which path leads to freedom, equality, and happiness, we should not try to change another's views by means of nuclear weapons. Now this nuclear

threat, like a two-edged sword of Damocles, hangs over the heads of all mankind, not a select few. Should it fall, it will spare no one.

The necessary philosophy for survival in this modern era contains several significant implications. For instance, we must learn to express opinions, no matter how unpleasant, without threatening or injuring the national and human dignity of those who do not share our opinions. Equally important, we must learn to express opinions without exciting in ourselves and others fear and hatred for those who think differently.

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Here again special responsibility rests upon those with the potential to destroy everything through the use of nuclear weapons, primarily the US and the USSR. Some Americans do not like many things about the USSR; the same is true of some Soviet attitudes towards the US. And everyone is entitled to express opinions within, of course, the limits expected of any civilized society. Thus, conflicts will always exist, but in the present nuclear age, they can no longer be resolved by war and violence. This will require both new thinking and new action by the USSR and US.

New political thinking must be based on a reasonable practice of international relations. I would say we need a rational humanistic approach, based on our new information of nuclear danger and global interrelatedness, rather than a thoughtless continuation of faith in the permanency of many stereotypes that developed over recent centuries. And here let me quote Leo Tolstoy, who, reflecting on the correlation of reason and faith in man's world outlook, wrote:

Misinterpreters of the truth usually say that reason can't be trusted because it speaks differently in different men... But such a claim is quite the opposite of the truth. Reason never speaks differently. It always speaks alike in all men... Whether God is said to have appeared in a pillar of fire, or Buddha to have ascended on sunrays, or Mohammed to have flown to the heavens, or Christ to have walked on water... rational men, always and everywhere answer in a similar manner: This isn't true. But, to the questions, "Is it right to do unto others as you would they do unto you? Is it good to love and forgive them, do good to them?" The reason of all men throughout time has said: "Yes, it's right and worthwhile."
(1)

The strategy of survival in the nuclear age presupposes a new awareness of security for one's own country and for other nations, and consequently a new approach to international security. Assuming that all the members of

the international community acknowledge and subsequently reject nuclear war as collective suicide, they should be interested in removal of those factors which make a nuclear conflict likely. The two most important and decisive factors being: the nuclear arms race and striving for military superiority.

The Logic of Nuclear Thinking

Many years of experience have shown that even with a sincere desire to stop the arms race and reduce armaments, it is still very difficult to reach an agreement - especially in an atmosphere of international tension and mutual mistrust. In the absence of agreement, a continuing arms race leads only to still greater tension and mistrust. The system, therefore, has built into it a spiraling or escalating effect.

What is the way out of this vicious cycle?

In my opinion, this will occur only when the new logic of international relations will be recognized and accepted: In a world of nuclear overkill and growing interdependence, it is impossible to secure a unilateral advantage for oneself to the detriment of the other side without ultimately impairing one's own interests. Recognition of this basic fact provides the basis for establishing one of the main principles of the new way of thinking.

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The stark realities of the nuclear age demand a revision of such basic notions as strength, superiority, victory, and security. Nuclear war now, it is clear, cannot be the continuation of state policy by other means. Victory in a nuclear war is as much an illusion as is the idea that there can be security for one side to the detriment of the other.

Genuine security in the present nuclear age must always mean universal international security. This international security is based on the premise that both sides consider each other's interests and, while ensuring security for one side, see to it that the security of the other side is not compromised. Common security can only be possible when based on the principle of equality and equal security.

Naturally achieving this goal is difficult and will take time, for it means abandoning many old and habitual modes of thought. For years, a gain for one side implied a loss for the other. Moreover, it was considered beneficial when damage occurred to one's opponent. In fact, these principles are

given expression by some military and political strategists who continue to hold to the concept of deterrence or the doctrines of a limited and protracted war, the ultimate goal being the infliction of grave or mortal damage to the other side.

Instead, the philosophy of survival in this age of nuclear overkill presupposes a shift away from present military and political thinking, based as it is on now-antiquated notions of strength, superiority, and winnable war. Thus, real differences between new and traditional political thinking involve more than the issue of a possible nuclear war, since there can be no winners and no survival under these conditions. It is hard today to imagine any sane person seriously believing it possible to achieve one's political aims by using nuclear weapons.

There is still another matter to consider. New and traditional thinking have clearly distinguishable and diametrically opposed viewpoints in their approach to a state of security. New thinking urges renouncing force in international relations and guaranteeing security only by political means. Old thinking seeks to preserve conventional power politics through the use of sophisticated military technology. The former viewpoint calls for a constructive and creative interaction of nations and peoples on a global scale. The latter envisions perpetual armed camps of "them" and "us" and hopes to create a Noah's ark on this planet in which "the chosen" can possibly sit out the "deluge" of mankind's global problems.

The main danger of war, even of a war fought with conventional weapons, lies in its unpredictability. Experience shows that during wars, the entire intellectual and physical potentials of the belligerent nations are concentrated on achieving one goal – defeat of the enemy. Even regional wars have resulted in the invention and employment of new conventional armaments which have then become most dangerous weapons. And how many times has the temptation to use nuclear weapons arisen during these conflicts?

Every regional conflict which flares in various areas of the world has its own specific danger. Such conflicts have a tendency to spread and involve a considerable number of other states. These conflicts tend to poison the international atmosphere. The time has come not only to understand their basic causes, but to root them from the soil of world politics. The Middle East, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua can become zones of peace and tranquility. This will occur only through joint parallel efforts of those governments affected by the conflicts. A policy which vigorously pursues the resolution of conflict must become a reality. In any case, the use of force in regional conflicts is no longer justified. The full voice of politicians and diplomats and not the roar of guns and rockets should be heard.

The question arises: Is it possible to halt the arms race and to reduce

spending on arms? Reykjavik gave us an answer. At that meeting top Soviet and American leaders reached a basic, if not formal, understanding on the need to eliminate nuclear weapons in ten years, a relatively short time. At Reykjavik what had only been a “dream” in all our minds could have become reality. This itself is historic - a first important step on the road to disarmament was taken.

Our Common Home

That the Earth is our home is now common knowledge. But do we always remember that our planet is the home of all mankind, rather than for just two or several of its nations? Or do we at times behave in our common home as if it were our exclusive estate, regarding other nations as invited guests at best? Yet, large or small, the other nations, like ourselves, are the caretakers of our planet and have no less right to be safe and well-off while living on it.

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For all their importance, Soviet-American relations cannot overshadow the modern world’s diversity, contradictions, and problems. This requires considering the concept of all-embracing international security. If we really want to conduct world affairs humanely, we should not be indifferent to Third World troubles. Reason, not just a natural compassion, bids us so. Africa, Asia, and Latin America’s plight soon may turn into a tragedy which will affect industrialized lands too.

Apart from straining East-West relations, the arms race widens the gap between the North and the South, and is fraught with the danger of global upheaval in our interdependent world. New thinking in the nuclear age also demands awareness of the importance of these new problems and ways of solving them. This is all the more important since East-West confrontation represents the number one political issue in the minds of the majority of people in the Northern Hemisphere. On the other hand, people in the south regard this view as a manifestation of isolationism and a legacy of colonial rule.

Within the next few decades North-South conflict may grow into an awesome confrontation dwarfing many of today’s problems, though many people in the North today are still unaware of such a dramatic end result. It is not a certainty, but a definite possibility, if conditions continue as they are. They cannot be overlooked since no problem of this sort has gone away of its own accord: a cure rather than a palliative is needed. Moreover,

in this case conditions are worsened by the huge gap in development between the North and the South, and its associated hunger, poverty, illiteracy, and backwardness for a considerable part of the Third World population.

Remove the Cause - The Disease Will Pass

The ancients used to say: "Sublata causa, toletur morbus." Remove the cause - the disease will pass. We could paraphrase the applicability of this dictum for today's international relationships: "Stop the arms race in order to have a sound world economy and healthy politics."

It will take much time and effort to close the gaps between the economic levels for developed countries of the North and the emergent nations of the South. At present these keep widening. There can be no simple and swift solution here. Progress to this goal undoubtedly calls for the establishment of a new international economic order, for the restructuring of unfair and unequal economic relations between many industrialized developed powers and developing countries, and for penetrating social and economic changes in the Third World itself.

But these problems can only be resolved if the arms race is halted and subsequently ended. Then, the developed nations, released from the crushing burden of military spending, will be able to allocate more resources to aid struggling poorer countries.

The above abysmal gap between the North and the South is well illustrated by the following figures. About \$800 billion is being spent on the arms race each year. This is more than the incomes of the world's fifty poorest nations, with 1.5 billion inhabitants. Fuel poured into combat vehicles, tanks, planes, and ships equals half of Third World oil needs. The developing states use less copper, lead, tin, aluminum, nickel, zinc, and platinum-group metals than goes into the arms race. Is this a wise order of priorities, not only for Third World development, but for international security as a whole?

The Time Bomb

Twentieth-century man's impact on nature has begun to assume dangerous proportions; as a consequence, an ecological time bomb is ticking on Earth. This ticking becomes ever louder as the environment deteriorates, most often through the misuse of major natural resources - water, air, soil, animal and plant life - and as environmental pollution spreads to threaten life on Earth. Concerns for the environment and actions to limit pollution must become part of our global plan as soon as possible.

A true picture of the scope and extent of needed changes for the present and in the imminent future can only be made by using approaches which

recognize the complexities of relationships and interdependencies of man and his environment. Factors have combined to diminish our Earth's apparent size and to restrict its possibilities. These include: the growing world population (which doubled every 30,000 years at the dawn of civilization and doubles every thirty-nine years today), and drastic depletion of natural resources such as fresh water, fertile soil, animal and plant life, raw materials, and energy sources. Added to this is the recent discovery of depletion of our protective ozone layer over Antarctica, exemplifying yet another and human effect on planetary ecological survival systems.

Not long ago many believed that environmental protection was a primary concern only for industrialized countries where human intervention with the environment was most pronounced. But now we hear alarming predictions from futurists about doomsday-like accumulative effects from negative demographic, socioeconomic, and ecological trends resulting from many Third World country actions. Environmental degradation is proceeding in a most intensive fashion in these places. It is enough to provide just a single example like the desertification in Africa which has reached a tragic scale.

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Worsened environmental conditions in some parts of the Third World are already affecting global ecology. Consider the increased carbon dioxide content in the air, which may lead to global climatic changes within the next few generations. This development results from a mix of at least two tendencies: the continuing growth of worldwide hydrocarbon fuel use and the chopping down of tropical forests by developing countries.

Pondering ways to resolve present-day complex problems, more farsighted scholars draw two important and correct conclusions. First, unlike earlier societies, the world today is witnessing a growing interdependence of global problems, none of which can be resolved independently of the others. Second, a new thinking is needed in our age, prompted by worsening global conditions which confront mankind with the need to devise a new and lasting approach to their solution. These conclusions have been drawn, in particular, by Günter Kunz and Friederich Wester of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). The latter, the leader of a Munich team of biological and environmental scholars, observed that our world is a very complex mesh of interdependencies, but that we often view every phenomenon and concept individually, out of the context of their interde-

dependencies or, as he puts it, “out of their cybernetic interaction.” (2)

Friederich Wester concludes: “We need new thinking with new dimensions.” (3) Günter Kunz shares his view: “Only a serious and well-thought-out approach to complex systems based on new thinking can ensure that we will continue to live in peace with nature.” (4)

These experts, like many others, rightly believe that our ecological problems are closely related to the problem of peace and can only be resolved under conditions of peace. Moreover, they recognize the special danger of the escalating arms race. Günter Kunz believes:

As a consequence of technological progress, the arms race keeps increasing the risk of war which could escalate into a worldwide atomic catastrophe, not only because “accidents” at different levels cannot be ruled out, but also due to the temptation that still exists to use armed force to resolve disputes.

He draws a very important conclusion:

Psychologically, [the arms race] promotes intolerable and outdated thinking and views in nationalistic or imperial categories, which facilitate brutal and violent actions (national arrogance, thinking in terms of prestige, hunger for world dominance, prejudice against foreigners, or violence in domestic politics). It perpetuates a form of relationship typical of the Stone Age (Law of the Fist) in state-to-state and often in domestic relationships. Such actions may be characterized polemically and not unjustifiably as “pollution of the spiritual environment.” (5)

Even if we succeed in avoiding the worst of possible consequences – death in the fires of thermonuclear catastrophe or the snow of “nuclear winter” – continuing the arms race will doom the world to a chronic feverish state of military conflicts and crises and to ecological disaster. A “Noah’s ark” strategy will be useless in this situation; there can be no safe place to hide, no “safe harbor.” Instead, should those days come to pass, they will bring with them the horrors of the ancient prophesied apocalypse when “Men shall seek death and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.”

Nuclear War - Super Taboo

Where is the way out of the dead end into which the arrogance of power drives mankind? Shall we have enough determination and wisdom to curb the forces that we ourselves have created and use them for our own benefit instead of harm? Hardly anybody has a universal recipe to cure all mankind’s wounds and ills. But one thing is clear: Cure them we must. We simply have no other choice.

In a nuclear world, it is impossible to cut the Gordian knot of tangled global problems at one stroke of a crusader’s sword. The nuclear sword

would certainly cut the knot, but it would also put an end to the human race in the process. Only by carefully untangling the knot of problems and by cooperative joint efforts will it be possible to find a way out of the maze of nuclear despair into a world of reason, trust, and cooperation.

Survival of the two different social systems must be accepted as a given. That is basic. First, change in thinking must be firmly established. Without acceptance of the long-term continuation of both capitalism and socialism – with all their multiple variations – no new thinking will prevail. That is the starting point. At the same time, we can explore all mutual means of survival.

It is fortunate that both countries have chosen this path. Present efforts by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan and their coworkers may lead to important agreements concerning eliminating rockets with nuclear warheads in Europe. The USSR and US are striving to reach agreement on nuclear disarmament. This process, however, may prove to be extremely difficult.

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In this joint effort common sense is gradually prevailing. This prompts the realization that people should observe a possibility boundary – a “taboo line” for their activities. Nuclear war now means death for humanity – it’s a “super taboo.” Unfortunately humans have the capacity to cross over this limit. At the same time scientific studies have shown that there will be no survivors after a nuclear holocaust. This is why nuclear weapons are such a dread adversary of all state governments and their peoples. Either we eliminate nuclear weapons, or they will eliminate us. This leads to a very distinct conclusion for politics and diplomacy in the nuclear age: We must eliminate all nuclear weapons and any other means of annihilating people as soon as possible. By developing a political will to do so, the US and the USSR, along with other countries, can achieve this complex task.

The arms race must come to an end. Instead, efforts should be directed to create stable security for all. Nuclear deterrence will become completely unnecessary in the face of a comprehensive security system, deep reduction of arms, and total elimination of nuclear weapons. The immorality of nuclear deterrence will become abundantly clear.

The USSR and the US, as well as other governments, can explore space for peaceful purposes. To this end they could work to further mutually beneficial large-scale projects, including a joint manned mission to Mars.

Security for the international community can be based on “deterrence through verification.” Strict adherence to national and international verific-

ation can prove highly beneficial in building required confidence for maintaining agreements on disarmament.

Moscow and Washington, along with other industrialized states, could use financial resources, realized from disarmament, to support a number of vitally important projects in the Third World, in such places as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Specific projects in Africa could involve altering present practices of desertification, providing clean drinking water, abolishing tropical diseases, and constructing children's hospitals.

These projects as well as others leading to peaceful cooperation can become a reality. This will occur only if we truly have the desire to make them so. This realization will require new political thinking on our part. In the long run this process must be adopted by all politicians. The sooner the better for all of us. As long as we behave rationally in the future, all is not lost.

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