

EDITOR'S NOTE

We are pleased to present in this issue the four winners of the Doreen and Jim McElvany 2008 Nonproliferation Challenge Essay Contest. The contest sought “the most outstanding new papers in the nonproliferation field . . . to generate new insights and recommendations for resolving contemporary nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons challenges, including those involving both state and non-state actors.” The response to the contest was outstanding, so much so that with the generous support of the McElvanys we are making it an annual event (see our website and the advertisement in the back of this issue for more details). We received dozens of entries from around the world—not to mention from twenty-four states and the District of Columbia. Judges for the contest were drawn from the staff of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, and all entries were evaluated anonymously for their originality and creativity, adherence to the contest theme, writing style and organization, sophistication of analysis, and overall contribution to the field.

Independent scholar Ward Wilson took the grand prize of \$10,000 with his impressive and detailed critique of the nature and effectiveness of nuclear deterrence. Wilson, who wrote a provocative article on a similar theme in *International Security* last year, is well on his way to deconstructing the most fundamental beliefs about nuclear weapons. But whereas many who oppose nuclear weapons take a stand on moral, ethical, or even economic grounds, Wilson takes a more practical approach, arguing through careful research that nuclear weapons do not possess certain essential qualities claimed by their advocates—qualities that have fostered a mythology about nuclear weapons that few have questioned. Sixty-three years after the first and only use of nuclear weapons in war, it is not too soon to question the assumptions underpinning the desire to acquire or retain the original weapon of mass destruction. Read Wilson’s article and decide for yourself if he’s onto something. And then write and tell us what you think.

Nathan Pyles (Johnson Health Tech NA) earned the first runner-up prize of \$1,000 for his exploration of how branding can be used to build political momentum for a global nuclear disarmament movement. Examining the power of President John F. Kennedy’s 1961 call for the United States to land a man on the moon, Pyles asks if nuclear disarmament goals could be conveyed in similar visionary terms, rather than the acronym-laced technical jargon typically produced by the arms control community. He lays out a proposal for creating a “Nuclear-Free-World Movement” with the objective of unifying a variety of organizations and individuals around the idea of eliminating all nuclear weapons by October 11, 2021, the thirty-fifth anniversary of the Ronald Reagan-Mikhail Gorbachev summit in Reykjavik, Iceland. The ideas may need fine-tuning, but we think his proposal is worthy of further serious consideration by the arms control community, policy makers, and the general public.

Grégoire Mallard (Richard Tomlinson Postdoctoral Fellow at McGill University) is one of two winners of the \$1,000 student prize for an article examining how the European Community of Atomic Energy (EURATOM) Treaty could be used as a model for enhancing nuclear safeguards and confidence-building measures in the Middle East. Mallard argues that some of the technical provisions of the treaty—particularly in the area of safeguards,

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confidence-building measures, and fuel supply assurances—could be applicable to the Middle East. However, he also notes that there are a number of factors in the Middle East today that make achieving such a supranational agreement problematic. Nevertheless, if such an agreement could be implemented, it could reduce regional tensions over nuclear proliferation and pave the way for a Middle East Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone. As Mallard notes, “Such a proposal is ambitious, as it assumes a will to cooperate that may not exist among these countries. But it is also realistic, since it does not seek to hide the risks that such a regional authority might not function properly.”

Russell Leslie (Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office; Australian National University) is the other student prize-winner. His essay can perhaps best be described by referring to the common political aphorism, “Where you stand depends on where you sit.” Individual countries and regional groupings address nonproliferation issues using internally consistent but often competing paradigms, Leslie writes. For example, a state possessing nuclear weapons will have a very different perspective than a non-nuclear weapon state on the purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular the meaning of Article VI. These different understandings often give rise to the belief that parties are negotiating in bad faith, which impedes discussion, understanding, and attempts to reach common ground. Leslie acknowledges there are no easy solutions to this problem but argues that in order for significant progress to be made on nonproliferation and disarmament, discussants must at the very least acknowledge that they not only have differing views of and expectations for the best solutions, but also that they often don’t even agree on the nature of the problem.

Leading off our Viewpoints section in this issue is Bruce Sugden (Washington, DC–based defense analyst), who argues that it is premature and even dangerous for the United States to contemplate the complete elimination of its nuclear arsenal. To do so, he asserts, would not significantly diminish the pressures to proliferate because U.S. conventional superiority and regional security concerns are far more important drivers. Moreover, absent nuclear weapons, the risk of war between major powers would likely increase, while the “insurance” the United States now enjoys vis-à-vis significant technological challenges to its military superiority would decrease.

Danielle Peterson (Pacific Northwest National Laboratory), Richard S. Goorevich (Department of Energy’s Office of International Regimes and Agreements), Rich Hooper (Wind River Consulting), Lawrence Scheinman (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies), and James W. Tape (JWT Consulting) explore the evolution of export controls and international safeguards, discuss how these two critical components of the nonproliferation regime interact, and suggest some ways to integrate the two in order to confront the supply-side challenges to curtailing the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons-related technologies.

Arian Pregonzer (Sandia National Laboratories) tackles two of the most popular arguments against nuclear disarmament: that we don’t yet know how to get from here to there, and that, even if we did, the necessary cooperation and trust to eliminate nuclear weapons do not exist. She suggests that rather than becoming fixated on the obstacles to achieving the objectives of Article VI of the NPT, states supportive of disarmament (including non-nuclear weapon states) should concentrate on near-term gains through

technical cooperation, including improving the protection, control, and accounting of nuclear weapons and weapons-related materials, and increasing the transparency of existing weapons-related activities. In so doing, it may be possible to demonstrate relatively quickly a tangible commitment to Article VI and to create the technical basis for an effective and verifiable nuclear disarmament regime.

This issue also features three reviews of five significant new books. Janne E. Nolan (University of Pittsburgh's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs; Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University) ponders the contradictions underlying the non-use of nuclear weapons in her critique of Nina Tannenwald's *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons since 1945*. Jing-dong Yuan (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies) considers the efficacy of U.S. diplomacy in *Reluctant Restraint: The Evolution of China's Nonproliferation Policies and Practices*, by Evan S. Medeiros. And Michael Krepon (Henry L. Stimson Center; University of Virginia) considers the challenges of defining and controlling the use of space weapons in his joint review of Joan Johnson-Freese's *Space as a Strategic Asset*, Michael Moore's *Twilight War: The Folly of U.S. Space Dominance*, and James Clay Moltz's *The Politics of Space Security: Strategic Restraint and the Pursuit of National Interest*.

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