

The hoax of the nuclear test ban treaty: civilian and military progress obstructed

by Robert Gallagher

Considering their relative unimportance as a military force, particularly in nuclear weapons, it is remarkable to consider how much influence the British have had over U.S. arms and arms control policies.

—Glenn Seaborg, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, 1982.

At the end of the Eisenhower presidency in 1960, the United States was on the verge of beginning deployment of an effective, short-range “terminal defense” system of anti-ballistic missile systems against ICBMs, through the program of successful tests of Project Defender; and the nation was developing “Project Plowshare,” the program of controlled use of small, “clean” thermonuclear explosives for mining, excavation, and the rapid building of modern industrial infrastructure in the developing regions of the world.

Both these efforts came to a halt in the years of negotiation and signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the turning point in the imposition of the MAD doctrine upon the United States and Soviet Union. From that point onward, the Dulles “massive retaliation” policy, accepted by Eisenhower as a temporary expedient, was replaced by the doctrine that such massive retaliation was the only *permissible* means of nuclear defense that a nation might contemplate.

British negotiators largely called the shots in the preparations of the treaty, and it was the British, Bertrand Russell-led “Ban the Bomb” movement that conducted worldwide manipulation of “fallout” fears to force the signing. The majority of developing-nations leaders were coopted by the Anglo-American arms control lobby, accepting the fraud that the only purpose of nuclear testing is to build offensive nuclear weapons for the destruction of civilizations.

This brief account of the negotiations and ratification of the 1963 Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty that banned nuclear testing in the atmosphere, in space and underwater seeks to clear the historical record of these frauds.

We will also document how the pace and purpose of the negotiations was set by Britain through Prime Minister Har-

old Macmillan and associates, such as U.S. chief negotiator Averell Harriman, appointed to his role not by President John Kennedy but by Macmillan.

Treaty launched arms race

The original parties to the Test Ban Treaty were the United States, the Soviet Union, and Great Britain. Through the treaty, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan imposed a technology freeze upon the United States and Western Europe. With ratification of the treaty, the United States and the Soviet Union embarked on the biggest offensive arms race in history, a race that produced, for example, the technology of multiple, independently targetable warheads, or MIRVs, with which a single missile could destroy five American or Soviet cities.

Because it banned atmospheric testing, the treaty:

- prevented development of peaceful nuclear explosives that held the promise of a technology that could dig canals, reservoirs, and harbors, divert rivers for irrigation and power generation, and mine mineral resources throughout the developing sector with its tremendous earth-moving power;
- dealt a death-blow to development of effective anti-ballistic missile (ABM) technologies to protect the U.S. from nuclear attack;
- retarded the progress of nuclear and plasma physics; and
- made development of advanced nuclear propulsion systems for space flight more difficult.

President Kennedy motivated the treaty as “an important opening wedge in our effort to ‘get the genie back in the bottle.’ ”

The treaty was attacked by Dr. John Foster, director of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory; former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Lewis Strauss; Gen. Thomas Power, commander of the Strategic Air Command; former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. (retired) Arleigh Burke; former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff A.F. Gen. (retired) Nathan Twining and many others. Former President Eisenhower, threatened by the Kennedy administration with a

scandal involving a former aide, formally supported the treaty but implied that the treaty was incompatible with U.S. national sovereignty.

Support for the treaty in the United States came from what is called today the "nuclear freeze" movement: Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara; Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy; Assistant for Science and Technology Jerome Wiesner; Wiesner's predecessor in the Eisenhower administration, James Killian; Averell Harriman; Hubert Humphrey, who played the role of Senate echo-chamber for Macmillan's proposals; and many others.

'A Step toward war'

Dr. Edward Teller provided the most eloquent explanation of the inherently regressive character of efforts to limit nuclear testing in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during hearings on the treaty.

The reason that I am worried about this treaty is because I believe that this treaty is a step not toward peace but rather a step away from safety, possibly a step toward war. . . .

The treaty will permit the Russians and us, and anybody else, to develop nuclear explosive underground. This will permit us to perfect not every kind of an aggressive weapon, but very important kinds of aggressive weapons. This treaty, therefore, will not have the direct effect of slowing down the development of aggressive weapons. What it will do is to prohibit us from acquiring the knowledge about effects of weapons, those effects which are of vital importance in ballistic missile defense. . . .

Secretary McNamara has told you that if you don't have enough knowledge about the hardening of our missile sites we will make up for it by building more missiles, by spacing these missiles farther apart, by making them harder. . . . What Secretary McNamara is telling you is that he is willing to substitute brawn for brain, to spend more and more money for defense. This is what has been rightly called an arms race. To acquire more knowledge, to acquire more knowledge in order to know how to defend ourselves, this, I would suggest, is not quite properly called an arms race. This treaty will not prevent the arms race. It will stimulate it. This treaty is not directed against the arms race. This treaty is directed against knowledge. . . . Even space exploration may become possible using nuclear explosions. This treaty is a treaty whose main point is to bar knowledge, to prohibit knowledge, the acquiring of knowledge that we need now for our defense, and it also interferes with knowledge which we may acquire otherwise in the future, and which we may want for scientific purposes, for the purpose of a big and expensive space adventure. . . .

I want to say that this treaty prohibits future science,

future progress, the kind of thing on which the greatness of this country has been based.

Teller proposed a four-point peace program:

- Development of ABMs for a strong defense.
- Sharing ABM technology with Western Europe as the first step in expensive cooperation.
- Cooperation with the Soviet Union: "We can work together on cancer research, we can work together in outer space. We might even work together on the peaceful use of nuclear explosives."
- Unilateral declassification of military "secrets": "to work toward more general disarmament . . . the first step must be the abolishing of secrecy."

Nuclear testing is not the bogey-man that the Pepsi generation believes it to be. In 1961, Dr. James van Allen described planned U.S. atmospheric testing of that year as "magnificent experiments that will add to man's knowledge of the universe." Dr. Teller explained that in nuclear testing:

. . . one does not in general develop a weapon. One develops an instrument. This instrument can be used as a weapon and it can be used for peaceful purposes. An internal combustion engine in a car is a peaceful instrument, in a fighter plane or in a bomber it is a dangerous weapon. A nuclear explosive was a dangerous weapon, we are now beating it into plowshares. Every development which you try to retard will be an impediment for progress, for knowledge, and I think we should sharply differentiate between development of instruments and between the proper use of these instruments.

Dr. Teller explained how the treaty would retard economic development in the developing sector:

I believe that the most important applications of Plowshare [the program to develop peaceful nuclear explo-

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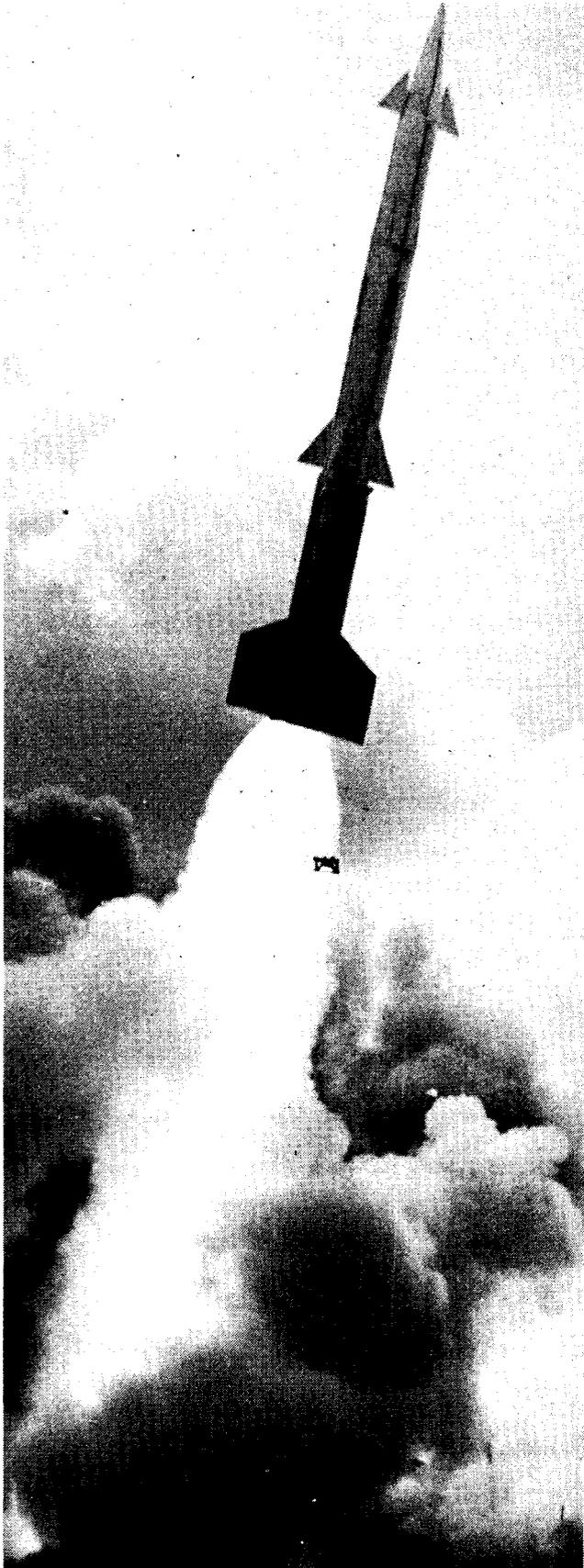
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A Zeus missile: targeted by the McNamara group.

sives] which I have encountered lie outside the U.S., such as for instance the sea level Isthmian Canal which has been very frequently discussed.

I believe that the internal damage to our economy [from the treaty] is in my limited view not a very great one. But the damage to the help that we could give other countries, to our relation to other countries, to the development of the underdeveloped countries, these damages could become very great.

It was not the Soviets who demanded that the treaty cover Plowshare, but the agent of the anti-technology British, Averell Harriman.

The treaty prevented development of a reliable anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system in the United States by barring atmospheric testing that would have given U.S. scientists the knowledge required to work the bugs out of the U.S. Army Nike-Zeus system then under development. Dr. Teller testified that the Soviet Union had acquired this knowledge in its extensive series of atmospheric tests in 1961 and 1962. For this reason, he reported, they then rushed to negotiate a ban on atmospheric testing.

Indeed, in November 1961, a panel chaired by Hans Bethe for the Air Force Technical Applications Center had concluded that the Soviets had "drawn even or passed the U.S. in some aspects of thermonuclear weapons" in the recent atmospheric testing. Even Secretary of State Dean Rusk concluded that the United States was no longer in a favorable position to sign a test ban.

But Macmillan immediately pressed for a unilateral U.S.-British moratorium on atmospheric testing. "It was their technical view that such [atmospheric] tests didn't amount to much," reported McGeorge Bundy.

McNamara had classified the reasons why atmospheric testing was critical to ABM development. For this reason, the public lacked essential knowledge with which to evaluate the treaty and McNamara could lie to the Senate that atmospheric testing was not essential to the ABM program.

The Nike-Zeus anti-missile missile disabled incoming nuclear warheads with detonation of a low-yield nuclear explosive in space or high in the atmosphere. The principal unresolved problem for such a system was that it would tend to blind its own radar. As soon as one ABM had detonated—disabling one or more incoming warheads—the electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from the blast would temporarily blind existing radar technology, making it impossible to see other incoming warheads. Atmospheric testing was required to develop radar technology and hardening radar against the EMP. Because of the treaty the United States has not yet solved this problem.

Putting the genie back in the bottle

British involvement in the treaty preparations included everything from drafting the U.S. negotiating position to choosing Harriman as chief U.S. negotiator. The process was

punctuated with staged demonstrations throughout Britain and around the world against nuclear testing, such as the one that occurred "in the community of Aldermaston," the center of top-secret British technology control.

Cold reflection can only find it incredible that the British had representation equal to the United States at the Geneva Conference.

Because of technical problems in verifying a ban on underground testing, in January 1959 Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) chairman Lewis Strauss sought to abandon efforts for a comprehensive test ban pending further research, and proposed instead a treaty banning testing in the atmosphere. Eisenhower adopted this view but before he had a chance to propose it to the Soviets, Macmillan rushed to Moscow to propose establishment of a quota of 20 on-site inspections as a way of policing a comprehensive ban. Senator Humphrey rushed a letter to the White House that echoed Macmillan's proposal.

Macmillan steered the negotiations between his technology-powerful rivals. It was Britain which moved to revive talks during the Kennedy administration after they had been terminated following the U-2 incident. Even following resumption of U.S. and Soviet testing in 1961, the prime minister kept the talks alive. After the negotiations died yet again following the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Macmillan revived them for the last time.

On March 16, 1963, Macmillan proposed that Harriman lead a special U.S.-British negotiating team to Moscow to initiate final negotiations. The U.S. and British ambassadors in Moscow delivered this proposal, and Khrushchev accepted it. In June Macmillan sent British Labour Party head Harold Wilson to meet with Khrushchev in preparation. Wilson reported that prospects were "excellent" for an atmospheric test ban. The Soviets had already collected the data they needed to build an effective ABM defense of Moscow.

The Moscow negotiations quickly converged on such a treaty. The only stumbling block was agreement on a provision to permit development of peaceful nuclear explosives. Then, out of the blue, Harriman demanded a withdrawal clause. The Soviet negotiators reacted with surprise. Of course; they said, any nation has the right to withdraw from the treaty should it deem such action necessary to preserve national sovereignty. Harriman wasn't satisfied. He then proposed to exchange the U.S. AEC's demand for a provision protecting the Plowshare program for an unnecessary withdrawal clause. The Soviets, amused, agreed. Plowshare was killed.

Because the treaty bans "any nuclear explosion . . . in any environment if such explosion causes radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits" of the nation producing the device, the Plowshare program was barred from aiding the developing nations, since some radioactivity, however little, would be produced outside the United States in digging a new sea-level canal, for example, or digging a harbor for Nigeria, cheaply and efficiently.

ABM accord does not ban beam weaponry

Charges to the effect that President Reagan's energy-beam development policy violates the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union, are false. The treaty, which is currently under a scheduled 10-year review by the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva, does not prohibit research and development on ABM systems, though it does sharply curtail deployment of launchers and radars.

In the section entitled "Agreed Statements and Common Understandings Regarding the Treaty" is the "overview" of how the specific predicates of its prohibitions were viewed by the two nations in 1972.

Agreed Statement "D" clearly states: "the Parties agree that in the event ABM systems based on other physical principles [than those of 1972] and including components capable of substituting for ABM interceptor missiles, ABM launchers, or ABM radars are created in the future, specific limitations on such systems and their components would be subject to discussion in accordance with Article XIII and agreement in accordance with Article XIV of the Treaty."

Energy-beam ABM systems do in fact clearly involve fundamentally new physical principles, and they replace ABM interceptor missiles with energy or particle beams: launchers with lasers, accelerators or pulsed-power sources; and radars, at least in part, with long-range, long-wavelength infrared sensing devices.

The cited Article XIII of the treaty provides for a "Standing Consultative Commission," to "consider questions . . . and related situations which may be considered ambiguous." Further, to "consider possible changes in the strategic situation which have a bearing on the provisions of this Treaty;" and further, to "consider, as appropriate, possible proposals for further increasing the viability of this Treaty; including proposals for amendments . . .".

The cited Article XIV states that "each Party may propose amendments to this Treaty," and that "Five years after entry into force of this Treaty, and at five year intervals thereafter, the Parties shall together conduct a review of this Treaty." Such a review is currently ongoing, as the treaty entered into force in October 1972.