

# Book Reviews

## Nuclear Strategy

**The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy.**  
ROBERT JERVIS. Cornell University Press,  
Ithaca, N.Y., 1984. 203 pp. \$19.95.

There is already a voluminous literature on deterrence and nuclear strategy. Yet this concise and provocative book by Robert Jervis may well become a classic in the field, remembered and cited long after most of the huge crop of recent works have faded.

Jervis has updated and reapplied the thinking of the initial postwar generation of nuclear strategists in order to make sense of the contemporary debate over American nuclear strategy. In doing so he has drawn heavily upon the ideas of Bernard Brodie, Thomas Schelling, Glenn Snyder, James King, and others.

The heart of Jervis's argument is that "mutual assured destruction exists as a fact, irrespective of policy. . . . Once each side can destroy the other, any crisis brings up the possibility of this disastrous outcome" (p. 164).

Jervis contrasts his writing on deterrence, and that of the strategists on whom he draws, with what he terms the "countervailing strategy." This strategy is based on the assumption that it is critical for the United States and its allies to be prepared "to meet and block Soviet force at any level of violence" (p. 11) and "to meet potential Soviet threats on their own terms" (p. 20). Jervis argues (p. 12) that "because nuclear weapons enable the state that is losing a war to destroy the other side, they have produced a true revolution in strategy. In the past, military advantage allowed a state both to harm the other and to protect itself. Now protection is possible only with the other's cooperation" and "mutual vulnerability means that what now deters is the fear of the overwhelming costs of engaging in large-scale violence." Here Jervis provides a useful restatement of Hans Morgenthau's 1964 caution against "conventionalization," that is, thinking about nuclear weaponry in terms suitable only for a non-nuclear world.

Jervis's argument is particularly re-

vealing when set against much of the recent strategic debate in the United States, in which strategists around Ronald Reagan, concerned that the Soviets might be achieving a meaningful nuclear advantage, argued that the United States must be prepared to fight and win a nuclear war and the Republican platform in 1980 urged that the United States attain nuclear superiority. Yet, despite concerns that America's land-based ICBM's might be vulnerable to a Soviet first strike, the Reagan administration has moved away from talk of nuclear war-fighting and nuclear superiority.

Jervis has provided a readable and parsimonious counterweight to the tendency in much of the recent nuclear debate toward esoteric analyses of complex technical issues. He also rejects the implication that only those able to follow every nuance can make wholly informed judgments on the American-Soviet nuclear balance. In addition, he has provided a corrective by discussing these issues in the context of deterrence and generally as matters that are subsidiary rather than fundamental.

Finally, Jervis reminds us that we have little choice but to endure the troubling realities and ambiguities of deterrence, and he invokes Thomas Schelling's phrase "the threat that leaves something to chance."

It is essential to keep in mind that, just as the countervailing strategy affords no viable way out, calls for the total abolition of nuclear weapons are little more than ritual incantations. As long as states provide their own security, power rivalries and the need for some kind of balance will remain.

The United States and the Soviet Union have avoided a major war despite nearly 40 years of sometimes bitter antagonism. It is no easy task to preserve essential American and allied interests against Soviet threats while avoiding cataclysmic war. Jervis's book is a valuable aid to thinking clearly about these perils.

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**Atlas of Lithological-Paleogeographical Maps of the World.** (Atlas Litologo-Paleogeograficheskikh Kart Mira.) Late Precambrian and Paleozoic of Continents. A. RONOV, V. KHAIN, and K. SESLAVINSKY. USSR Academy of Sciences, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the USSR, and Ministry of Geology of the USSR, Moscow, 1984. 70 pp. + plates. 12 rubles, 35 kopeks.

In the early 1950's a unique and monumental project was begun in the U.S.S.R. under the direction of A. B. Ronov—no less than a complete inventory of the chemical composition of the sedimentary crust of the earth. This beautiful atlas is the latest product of that project. The atlas is welded to the detailed data base and representational scheme of the *Atlas of Lithological-Paleogeographical Maps of the USSR*, published in four large folio volumes from 1967 to 1969 with A. P. Vinogradov as chief editor.

Like the earlier work, the present atlas displays summary lithology in time slices for 18 series (epochs) of the Late Proterozoic and the Paleozoic. A companion volume covering the Mesozoic and Cenozoic (including ocean basins) is to follow in a year or two. The series of double-spread fold-out plates is at a scale of 1:60 million (polyconic projection), originally compiled for each continent at 1:25 million. The maps cut off arbitrarily at the present shoreline, even where submarine geology of the Paleozoic is well known (as it is, for example, with the North Sea). The maps display the dominant lithologies in standard symbols, overlain by colors that characterize the sedimentary regime as cratonic, geosynclinal, or (vaguely defined) orogenic. Special symbols indicate the presence of evaporites, coal, or glacial deposits even where these are minor in the lithology. Isopachs at intervals of 100 meters show the thickness for the time interval of each plate—in cratonic areas only. The main series of plates is supplemented by seven plates at a smaller scale that present a simplified version of the geology on plate-tectonic paleogeographic reconstructions, mainly based on work published by Scotese and his colleagues in 1979. Each of the plates is accompanied by a text synthesizing the lithology and geology of the epoch (two pages each for the main series and one page each for the plate-tectonic series).

A list of over 500 selected references, arranged by continent, is itself worth the price of admission and testifies to the