

Military Experts Provide Alternative to Obama's War

by Tony Papert

Aug. 25—At precisely the same time that LaRouchePAC was flooding Washington, D.C. with Lyndon LaRouche's warning that President Obama must not be renominated as the Democratic candidate, because he is taking the world to thermonuclear war, prominent Harvard University defense analyst Graham Allison was sounding the alarm about the danger of a U.S.-Russian nuclear confrontation. In an op-ed in London's *Financial Times* of Aug. 21, entitled "Thucydides' trap has been sprung in the Pacific," Allison calls for abandoning the path toward war, and embracing a policy outlined in an International Security Advisory Board (ISAB) report, entitled "Mutual Assured Stability: Essential Components and Near-Term Actions."

Allison, who is best known for his studies of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, chaired an independent study group, which was commissioned by the State Department in the Spring of 2011, to produce such a report on the question of war avoidance. The group includes a number of other leading strategists and foreign policy experts, including Joseph Cirincione, president of the Plowshares Fund, and an expert on nuclear weapons policy; former Defense Secretary William Perry; Robert Gallucci, former Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs; and George H.W. Bush National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft. The thrust of the report's argument is how to avoid nuclear war with Russia.

Not surprisingly, Allison's argument coincides precisely with that which has been put forward consistently by Gen. Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Dempsey—working in tandem with the efforts of LaRouche and his movement, and the Russian and Chinese leaderships—has been fighting aggressively against the Obama Administration's manifest intention to detonate new wars which will take the United States directly into a thermonuclear confrontation with the Russians and the Chinese. Like

Allison, Dempsey has frequently cited Thucydides, the historian of the Peloponnesian War which destroyed Athens, and insisted that the United States not fall into the same trap, of provoking a war that will destroy itself.

President Obama has clearly turned a deaf ear to these arguments, again and again, over the last years. The question is, will other American leaders do the same?

Allison's Warning

"Classical Athens was the centre of civilisation. Philosophy, history, drama, architecture, democracy—all beyond anything previously imagined," Allison wrote in his Aug. 21 op-ed. "This dramatic rise shocked Sparta, the established land power on the Peloponnese. Fear compelled its leaders to respond. Threat and counter-threat produced competition, then confrontation and finally conflict. At the end of 30 years of war, both states had been destroyed."

(Today, as LaRouche has pointed out, in the thermonuclear era, the destruction will take about five minutes.)

"Thucydides wrote of these events," Allison continued: "'It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this inspired in Sparta that made war inevitable.' Note the two crucial variables: rise and fear."

Turning to China, Allison wrote, "Never has a nation moved so far, so fast, up the international rankings on all dimensions of power. In a generation, a state whose gross domestic product was smaller than Spain's has become the second-largest economy in the world.

"If we were betting on the basis of history, the answer to the question about Thucydides' trap appears obvious. In 11 of 15 cases since 1500 where a rising power emerged to challenge a ruling power, war occurred. Think about Germany after unification as it overtook Britain as Europe's largest economy. In 1914



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Harvard University defense analyst Graham Allison chaired a State Department study group whose report on “Mutual Assured Stability” points to the threat of a thermonuclear confrontation between the United States and Russia, and proposes how to avoid it.



and in 1939, its aggression and the UK’s response produced world wars.”

(Some of Allison’s historiography is of the Brand-X, untrue variety, like his reference to 1914, but what he is fighting to achieve outweighs those errors.)

Allison ends his dramatic warning with a call to arms, so to speak: “To recognise powerful structural factors is not to argue that leaders are prisoners of the iron laws of history. It is rather to help us appreciate the magnitude of the challenge. If leaders in China and the US perform no better than their predecessors in classical Greece, or Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, historians of the 21st century will cite Thucydides in explaining the catastrophe that follows. The fact that war would be devastating for both nations is relevant but not decisive. Recall the first world war, in which all the combatants lost what they treasured most.”

The State Department Study Group

The report Allison’s study group produced on Aug. 14, posted on the State Department’s [website](#), does

not focus on China—rather, its objective is to avoid thermonuclear war with Russia, and establish a regime of long-term war avoidance, largely by actions aimed at what the late Edward Teller called “the common aims of mankind” (see this week’s *Strategy* section)—and then to expand that cooperation with Russia to include all other possible nations, most urgently China.

A basic recommendation of the report is that “Neither side bases decisions on nuclear force structure, posture, or doctrine on an assumption that the other is *an adversary or likely to engage in nuclear conflict*” (emphasis added).

The report recommends that “the United States and Russia join together around the values, norms and motives they share, commit to reducing the global nuclear threat, and agree to influence others to share their views.” That call to “join together around the values, norms and motives they share,” is repeated again and again throughout the report, referencing not only the United States and Russia, but all other nations, as those two powers encourage others to join with them in this collaboration.

“A critical aspect of greater strategic stability requires both the United States and Russia to recognize that the dire consequences of nuclear conflict between them would be disproportionate to the scale of any plausible bilateral disputes they may have with each other. It should be recognized that both U.S. conceptual thinking on mutual assured stability as well as the U.S. dialogue with Russia must create more clarity on these issues.”

They recommend that “the United States and Russia collaborate on a full range of public health issues of mutual interest: stopping drug trafficking (particularly from Afghanistan to Russia), infectious disease prevention, promotion of healthy lifestyles and decreased drug abuse, affordable health care delivery, and other areas as identified.”

For whatever reasons, the report never mentions any current issues such as Syria or Iran, or the insane war provocation constituted by the U.S. unilateral European ABM system being built around Russia’s borders. Instead, its authors try to flank that latter issue with some alternatives of their own, which necessarily base themselves on LaRouche’s Strategic Defense Initiative of 1977 and subsequent years.

First, to “Conduct a joint U.S.-Russia review of the requirements for national and multilateral missile de-



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Gen. James Cartwright (USMC), former JCS vice chairman, has proposed a war avoidance strategy based on “entanglement” or “beneficial interdependence.” He and other flag officers and diplomats have formed “Global Zero,” which campaigns for total elimination of nuclear arsenals.

fense in the coming years as missile technology continues to spread, with the goal of achieving a shared understanding of each nation’s requirements for effective missile defense.”

Then, more ambitiously, to “Develop agreements on sharing early warning data with Russia and using satellites to jointly monitor ballistic missile launches.”

Echoing the Military’s War Avoidance

Among the concepts cited in the ISAB report is one proposed by Gen. James Cartwright, the former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, until his retirement in September 2011. It is called “entanglement,” and framed as an alternative to the concept of Mutual Assured Destruction.

One of the components of that strategy is called “beneficial interdependence.” “Interdependence in humanitarian and economic as well as national security realms contributes to the benefits of mutual assured stability,” the report says. It cites Cartwright as having suggested the concept of “entanglement” as having beneficial aspects. The reference to Cartwright is one of only two references in the report.

In a June 26, 2012 presentation in Washington, sponsored by Johns Hopkins University’s Applied Physics Laboratory, Cartwright reported that during the Cold War, “entanglement” was put forward as an alter-

native to Mutual Assured Destruction. “If our economies were hooked together, if our defenses were hooked together, that the likelihood of going to conflict would be reduced. . . .”

Looking at the world as it is today, Cartwright said that the question that has to be asked, is, what will give us the adaptability, the comprehensive look at what’s going on in the world, the leverage of friends and allies, in order to reduce conflict? “The question is, how do you start to do this?” And the answer doesn’t include nuclear weapons, as Cartwright made clear, and has been making clear by his involvement with other retired flag officers and diplomats in a group called Global Zero, which is campaigning to eliminate all nuclear arsenals.

The problem that Cartwright highlighted in his June 26 presentation is that decisions about modernizing the U.S nuclear arsenal (which are 50-year decisions, he said) are being made without much discussion about strategy. The problem that the Russians have with the Obama Administration’s European missile defense plan is that they’re afraid that it would make possible a U.S. decapitation strike that would eliminate Russia’s counterforce capability, but, “that’s the sort of problem that can be solved with a treaty,” he said.

Cartwright had made the same point, earlier in May, during a presentation at the Joint Warfighting Conference in Virginia Beach, Va., not only with respect to Russia, but to China as well. He said the Pentagon’s Air Sea Battle concept is “demonizing China. That’s not in anybody’s best interests.” Then, in response to a question from *EIR* on Russia and missile defense, he described the same problem as in his June 26 presentation, and said, “We’re going to have to think our way out of this. We’re going to have to figure out how we’re going to do this.”

Indeed, the military has been attempting to avoid a U.S. confrontation with Russia and China—even as the Obama Administration pursues policies which are leading directly to such a thermonuclear conflict. The very existence of this nation, and the human race, depends upon whose strategy is ultimately victorious.