

1984

## Nuclear Peril

Donald M. Kerr

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kerr, Donald M. (1984) "Nuclear Peril," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 37 : No. 3 , Article 19.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol37/iss3/19>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

tion capabilities, changes in the balance of power, experience and infrastructure, cooperative intervention with surrogates, rising radicalism and instability in the Third World, and the validation of Soviet Great-Power credentials). The factors that might tend to diminish Soviet Third World involvement are also covered well, including economic constraints, US policies and actions, and diverging interests, among others. Overall, the authors believe that Soviet policy will continue to be aggressively opportunistic—willing to take advantage of situations that arise, but not part of some master plan for world domination. This is a thesis supported both by historical fact and current information.

In terms of US response, the authors offer a four-point prescription:

- Demonstrate US interests early and convincingly.
- Maintain credibility of possible US escalation.
- Recognize limitations of linkage.
- Emphasize crisis management and anticipatory involvement.

Clearly, these are all sound judgments. The more interesting and difficult question, however, is one upon which Hosmer and Wolfe do not touch: How does a government *convince the public* to endorse such demanding and possibly dangerous policies, particularly in the post-Vietnam period? This is at the heart of the current controversy surrounding US responses to external force

involvement in Central America. The answer, of course, is informing the public of the seriousness of the threat and the need for strong response by the United States. *Soviet Policy and Practice toward Third World Conflicts* is one such effort to bring such information before the public. By illustrating the complexities of Soviet policy and attitudes, Hosmer and Wolfe have made a significant contribution to the continuing debate over the meaning and response to Soviet adventurism in the developing world.

JAMES STAVRIDIS  
Lieutenant Commander, US Navy

Markey, Edward J. *Nuclear Peril*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1983. 183pp. \$14.95

In *Nuclear Peril*, Congressman Edward J. Markey (D., Mass.), an opponent of both nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, inadvertently reveals a remarkable degree of political opportunism. A critic of nuclear energy during the late 1970s when the Three Mile Island incident made such criticism fashionable, an advocate of non-proliferation in the early 1980s when India's Tarapur and Iraq's Osirak made that an attractive issue once again, and a promoter of a nuclear freeze when public interest was mounting, Markey has always focused on the particular nuclear issue receiving public attention and appears to have the most political potency.

Perhaps to demonstrate consistency, but more likely to demonstrate leadership in the nuclear area,

Markey has sought to connect all of these issues. He sees a direct connection between nuclear energy and nuclear weaponry: "The ultimate problem with nuclear power is nuclear bombs." Even though there are obvious connections between civil and military uses of nuclear energy, Markey clearly distorts those connections. For him, nuclear reactors are bomb factories, and for him the presence in a country of nuclear fuel or uranium oxide is dangerous.

In *Nuclear Peril*, Markey gives primary attention to non-proliferation issues, especially to the 1980 controversy over US supply of nuclear fuel to India's Tarapur reactors. However, he seems chiefly interested in opposing nuclear power. Indeed, he defines the proliferation issue in technical terms (i.e., as the spread of nuclear power plants and associated facilities, and the consequent technical capacity to produce nuclear weapons). From this perspective, which was embodied in the Carter policy, the proliferation issue cannot genuinely be resolved in a world in which nuclear energy is used to provide electrical power.

The solution to the proliferation problem, then, as Markey sees it, is to end nuclear power production and exports. And he advocates both the "dismantlement" of nuclear power plants in the United States and getting the United States out of the "nuclear export business." He argues this simple solution to a complex problem cautiously. For apparently he has discovered that you cannot seriously

advocate an immediate termination of nuclear power production either in this country or abroad, or an immediate termination of nuclear exports (particularly to countries with which the United States has agreements or contracts, and that accept full-scope safeguards), in the existing political atmosphere in the United States. Regardless, the effects of such proposals, even if they never become national policy, could harm US efforts to reestablish ourselves as a reliable supplier and to reassert leadership in non-proliferation policy.

Unless one believes Markey to misunderstand the issues totally or, more likely, to be first and foremost a critic of nuclear energy, it is difficult to understand why he takes the positions he has. He desires that the United States reassume global leadership on non-proliferation policy, and he believes that if the United States phases out nuclear energy and exports, its example will have the desired worldwide effect of terminating nuclear power production and commerce. He does not seem to understand that his recommendations would lead to an effective renunciation by the United States of its non-proliferation leadership, and to the "Pontius Pilate" approach to non-proliferation that has been so appealing to some members of Congress.

That Markey does not fully accept the logical consequences of his argument is evident in his decision concerning the use of leverage. Of course his policies would not allow leverage over the nuclear programs of other states. He argues that not only has

such leverage not been used, but that it should not be used: "Nuclear power is simply too dangerous a commodity to be a bargaining chip in world diplomacy." How, then, is the United States to exert leverage? With the full panoply of US political, economic and military power and influence—these, according to Markey, can and should be brought to bear in the struggle to prevent further proliferation. This argument assumes that non-proliferation is the most important problem in the world, and that it should shape US foreign and trade policies. Such is a dangerous and absurd argument.

If the United States followed Markey's advice, it would indeed cut the use of nuclear energy worldwide, but it would not change the tendencies for states to proliferate. Rather, both "problem states" and those seeking energy security would develop their own facilities for enrichment and reprocessing. These are both more difficult to safeguard and pose graver proliferation risks than the existing commercial facilities do under international safeguards.

Markey argues for the union of the antinuclear (energy) and the nuclear freeze (weapons) movements in this volume, as he has since in congressional and other public fora. He appears to understand the problems involved with fusing two disparate movements with divergent interests, but he seems to believe that public interest lobbyists and a grass roots movement can achieve success within Congress. He understands correctly that the great majority of Congress-

men are neither strongly committed for nor against nuclear energy, and that actions of the administration and of lobbyists, as well as expressions of public opinion can definitely influence their behavior. And this is what he proposes be done.

DONALD M. KERR  
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Perl, Raphael. *The Falkland Islands Dispute in International Law and Politics: A Documentary Sourcebook*. New York: Oceana, 1983. 722pp. \$45

For those of us eager to see an in-depth analysis of the international law implications of the 1982 Falklands War, this book is disappointing. The reasons for disappointment are attributable not so much to the content as to the volume's title, combined with the timing of its publication and the layout of its cover.

The book appeared early in 1983, with the Falklands War still fresh in mind. The first nine words of the title are emblazoned in large type across its cover and on its spine. The subtitle, "A Documentary Sourcebook," appears on the cover in letters one-fifth the size of those in the main title. They do not appear at all on the spine. The first sight of the book invariably draws an incredulous comment or question on how the author could possibly have written such a lengthy analysis of a just-concluded war.

Unfortunately, the book is not really about the 1982 war over the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, and what analysis it contains is a mere 55 pages