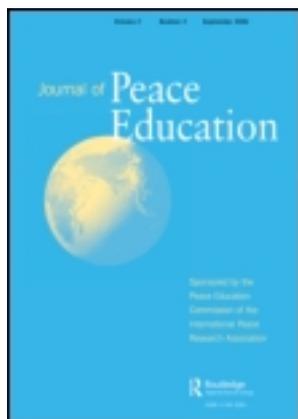


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The nuclear disarmament movement: politics, potential, and strategy

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The nuclear disarmament movement: politics, potential, and strategy

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Nuclear disarmament is a global ambition and requires collaboration, but who is collaborating, and what are their roles? This paper discusses the role of the American people in the path towards zero. Scholars have discussed at length the historical lessons of the global disarmament movement, and activists have worked to rekindle the movement after its doldrums in the 1990s. But the movement's forward-looking strategy, in terms of its overarching role, deserves – and perhaps needs – more analytical clarity than it has received. My aim is to provide an overview that sheds light on the disarmament movement's function and direction. More specifically, I argue that the disarmament movement can have a significant impact on nuclear-weapons policy in the USA, and to that end, I provide strategic recommendations for anti-nuclear-weapon organizations to help activate the public. My analysis is both predictive (about the potential success of the disarmament movement in affecting policy) and prescriptive (about the movement's strategy). The question I want to explore is not whether nuclear disarmament is desirable, but whether, and how, a social movement can move the US government towards disarmament.

Keywords: college/university; disarmament; historical movements; leadership; peace movements

Who expects politicians, generals, and bomb makers to disarm? People must disarm the bombs.

Philip Berrigan of the 'Plowshares Eight.' (Wittner 2009, 121)

Nuclear disarmament is a global ambition and requires collaboration, but who is collaborating, and what are their roles? This paper discusses the role of the American people in the path towards zero. Given the recent founding of Global Zero and President Obama's 'odd obsession' (Applebaum 2009) with disarmament, getting public support is urgent. Scholars have discussed at length the historical lessons of the global disarmament movement, and activists have worked to rekindle the movement after its doldrums in the 1990s. But the movement's forward-looking strategy, in terms of its overarching role, deserves – and perhaps needs – more analytical clarity than it has received. My aim is to provide an overview that sheds light on the disarmament movement's function and direction. More specifically, I argue that the disarmament movement can have a significant impact on nuclear-weapons

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policy in the USA, and to that end, I provide strategic recommendations for anti-nuclear-weapon organizations to help activate the public. My analysis is both predictive (about the potential success of the disarmament movement in affecting policy) and prescriptive (about the movement's strategy). The question I want to explore is not whether nuclear disarmament is desirable, but whether, and how, a social movement can move the US government towards disarmament.

This paper is comprised of three sections. In the first, I discuss the importance of the American public to the pursuit of disarmament. Next, I address two of the great obstacles to the disarmament movement: pessimism and complacency. Some people are skeptical that the elimination of nuclear weapons is a real possibility, and others are pessimistic about the role of movements in general. I offer a few reasons for optimism, and then turn to the complacency problem. Citizens are complacent because of a pervasive unawareness problem: the vast majority of people underestimate the risks of nuclear weapons. In the third section, I develop a strategic framework for the nuclear disarmament movement to help overcome complacency and pessimism. I conclude by suggesting a stronger connection between the disarmament movement and peace education.

1. Who decides?

The most important question that abolitionists must answer is the following: who has the power to decide the fate of the US nuclear arsenal? This question is crucial because activists must know whom they are trying to persuade. As Commander-in-Chief, the president has the authority to deploy US military weapons and to disarm them. But Congressional approval is necessary to pay for the weapons' dismantling and to ratify arms-reduction treaties on the path towards zero, so the target extends far beyond the president. As a global issue, however, it must also extend beyond the USA: international institutions and foreign countries play key symbolic and advisory roles, in addition to facing their own domestic obstacles to disarmament. But it is clear, in any case, that no one agent is the 'decider,' and there is no single basis on which the key actors can bring 27,000 nuclear weapons down to zero. So again, who decides?

My view is that ultimately the American people have the power to make decisions on disarmament. Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro's research on public opinion and policy in the USA suggests that public opinion 'is often a proximate cause of policy, affecting policy more than policy influences opinion' (Page and Shapiro 1983, 175). They find significant congruence between public opinion and policy for both domestic and foreign issues (182), and this trend obtains in all three branches of government (183). It could be that policy influences public opinion more than the other way around, but the vast majority of shifts in public opinion predate their parallel shifts in policy (185). Thomas Hartley and Bruce Russett reach a similar conclusion. Their data indicates that 'changes in public opinion consistently exert an effect on changes in military spending' (Hartley & Russett 1992). Paul Burstein's review of the scholarly literature confirms Hartley and Russett's conclusion. Burstein finds that public opinion 'affects policy three-quarters of the times its impact is gauged; its effect is of substantial policy importance at least a third of the time, and probably a fair amount more' (Burstein 2003, 36). Once we acknowledge that public opinion affects policy, the 'how' question arises – in what sense do the people decide?

Public opinion has a constraining effect and a persuasive effect on leaders. Public opinion constrains leaders because they try to avoid making unpopular decisions. President Reagan and his advisers were 'obsessed' with popular attitudes, and their obsession translated into significant changes in foreign policy and rhetoric in line with polls (Cortright 1993, 78). Like Reagan, most leaders want to stay in power, so they try to maintain approval ratings by acting in line with public opinion. Public opinion is also a tool that elected officials can use to persuade other officials to act in accordance with their own or their constituents' preferences. Congressional debates on social security, for instance, largely involve discussions about what the people want (Cook, Barabas, and Page 2002). Granted, the constraining and persuasive effects of public opinion are not absolute. Officials make decisions for reasons divorced from popular attitudes, and they sometimes make unpopular decisions. Leaders who are not subject to reelection may not feel as threatened by public opinion as leaders running for reelection. But the point remains – public opinion can have a strong impact on elite decision-making. In this basic sense, the support of the American people is essential to disarm the US nuclear arsenal. This power may not be a sufficient factor, but it is a necessary one. Disarmament advocates should try to persuade the president, legislators, and international leaders, but most fundamentally, they must persuade other people. The skeptic might object that while the public can have a significant influence on policy decisions, its influence may be curtailed on this issue because security trumps domestic politics. I consider this objection and explain why it does not succeed in Section 2.

Fortunately, public opinion (both domestic and international) favors the elimination of nuclear weapons, according to a World Public Opinion poll (2008). In the USA, the plurality opinion (39%) 'strongly favored' an agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons according to a timetable with verification measures, and only 20% opposed such an agreement. On average, 76% of world publics favored such an agreement, with 50% strongly in favor. It is not enough, however, for a vast majority to support disarmament if the issue is low on the popular agenda, perhaps only 'a mile wide and an inch deep' (Solo 1988, 24). Citizens must keep disarmament at the forefront of political discourse. Otherwise, the issue is vulnerable to misrepresentation by policy-makers. Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR 2004, 3) surveys in 2002 and 2004 reveal significant disparities between Congressional voting records and public attitudes on issues where the American public and American leaders share a broad consensus. In response to a 2004 CCFR survey about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, 85% of foreign policy leaders, 87% of the public, 80% of interviewed administration officials, and 61% of Congressional staffers supported the treaty, even though the Senate rejected ratification in 1999 and has not since acted in support of the treaty. Notably, the survey found 'that there was no significant difference between the attitudes in states in which both senators voted for ratification (83% favored) than in states in which both senators voted against it (80% favored)' (6). This finding suggests a wide gap between public beliefs and Congressional action, and the CCFR finds a similar gap in international issues such as UN participation, ratification of the Rome Statute, neutrality in the Israel–Palestinian conflict, limiting defense spending, and participation in the Kyoto treaty. More importantly, the finding suggests that public consensus is not a sufficient condition for policy success: the urgency and priority of the demand is critical.

But it would be premature to suggest that Congressional staffers are simply ignoring their constituents' views. CCFR (2004, 22) also finds that most Congressional staffers often misperceive their constituents' attitudes. While this common misperception is no grounds for celebration, it is comforting that staffers are at least trying to represent their constituents' views accurately, rather than flatly ignoring them. (A likely explanation for this effect is that Americans tend to assume that their representatives' voting record is in line with their own preferences; CCFR 2004, 25.) Besides misperception, another major obstacle to accurate representation is the influence of lobbies.¹ In the case of nuclear disarmament, the lobbies tend to be nuclear-weapon labs, former government officials, and like-minded think tanks. These interests groups care much more about the issue than the public do and enjoy privileged access to representatives because of their campaign contributions. But lobbies do not exercise invincible, absolute influence on policy. When the public is aroused on an issue – as during the early 1980s 'Nuclear Weapon Freeze' campaign – strong support can neutralize lobbyist influence (Leavitt 1983, 30). (I discuss this campaign in more detail in Section 3.) The question, then, is how to shape public opinion such that policy-makers get it right. Public opinion must not only support disarmament, but also make disarmament a highly salient issue in political discourse.

Salience is a key determinant of public opinion's impact on policy (Burstein 2003, 36), and the salience of disarmament as a public issue is largely dependent on public concern about nuclear weapons. In 1997, Rochon and Wood's (1997, 32) estimate was that the issue's salience had virtually disappeared. Between 1980 and 1988, concerns about both disarmament and nuclear weapons rose steeply, outpacing concern about US–Soviet relations more generally. The freeze movement's influence on public opinion began to decline, however, in 1988, bottoming out two years later. By 1990, less than a half percent of survey respondents to American National Election Studies said that nuclear disarmament or détente was one of the most important national issues (31). This finding makes it seem unlikely that the movement can rebound from such low salience.

Rochon and Wood's research is interesting because it reflects the general connection between public opinion about disarmament and the public's perception of the nuclear threat. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the popular perception of the threat declined, so the salience of nuclear disarmament declined. But a rebound in public salience is already underway. More recent data from American National Election Studies show a growing concern for nuclear-weapons issues – specifically war between nuclear-weapons states. In 2000 (Figure 1), most respondents were 'not worried at all' about the risk of nuclear war, but 44% was either 'somewhat worried' or 'very worried.' Only two years later (Figure 2), nearly three-quarters of respondents were 'somewhat worried' (49%) or 'very worried' (25%) about the risk of nuclear war.² Given this significant shift in only two years, the public can change its mind dramatically in a short period of time.³ In 2004 (Figure 3), the vast majority of respondents (87%) believed that nonproliferation should be a 'very important' foreign policy goal. A CNN Opinion Research Poll (2010) confirms this upward trend in salience: Thirty-eight percent of respondents said that an all-out nuclear war involving the USA is at least 'somewhat likely' to occur in the next decade, compared to 35% in 1980.⁴ These figures are by no means direct tests of public support for disarmament, but they are indirect tests of the growing salience of nuclear-weapons issues. If Rochon and Wood are

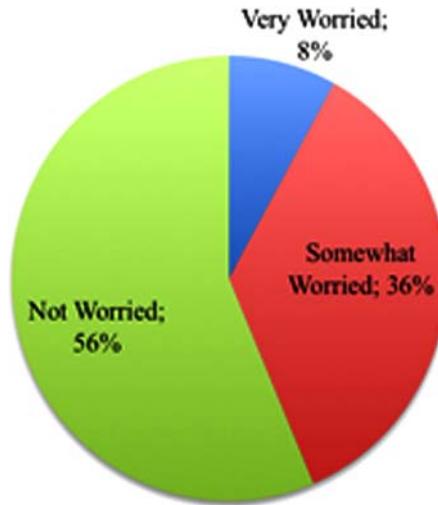


Figure 1. How worried are you about our country getting into a nuclear war at this time? (American National Election Studies 2000)

right about the strong relationship between nuclear-weapons concern and disarmament concern specifically, we have reason to believe that disarmament's salience as a national issue is growing. These indirect tests are relevant here because the question is whether people care about the issue and whether it can gain height on the public agenda (salience), not whether people support disarmament per se (support). For now, my analysis focuses on the former, although both salience and support are necessary.

In this section, I have argued that power to decide the fate of the US nuclear arsenal lies, to an important extent, with the American people. While this power may not be sufficient, it is necessary. With respect to public opinion, the abolitionist task is twofold – to gain public support and to gain salience.

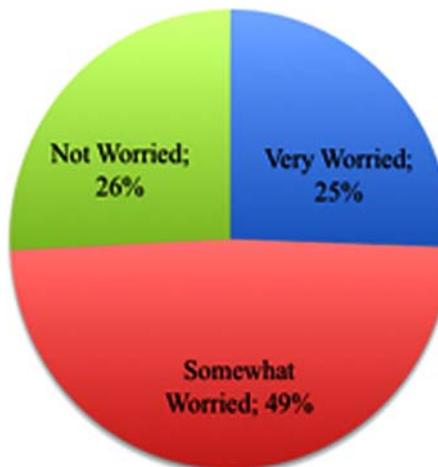


Figure 2. How worried are you about our country getting into a nuclear war at this time? (American National Election Studies 2002)

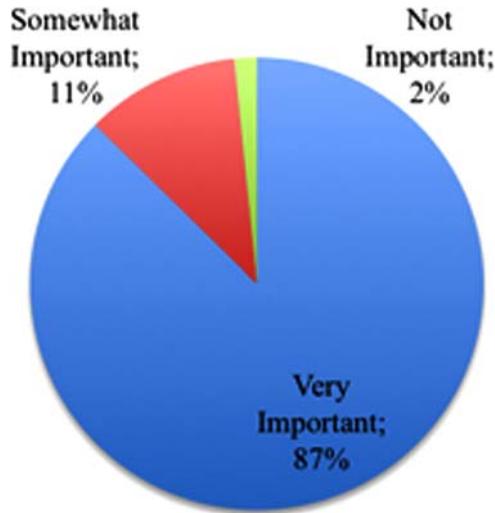


Figure 3. Should preventing the spread of nuclear weapons be a very important foreign policy goal, a somewhat important foreign policy goal, or not an important foreign policy goal at all? (American National Election Studies 2004)

2. Obstacles to the nuclear disarmament movement

Public support and salience face two great obstacles: pessimism and complacency.⁵ Pessimism is an obstacle to public support because if people are not confident that the movement can succeed, the movement is unlikely to grow in terms of numbers and political clout. Complacency is an obstacle to gaining salience because if people do not care about the nuclear threat, they have no reason to make vocal and urgent demands for disarmament. In this section, I discuss two forms of pessimism and why they are wrongheaded, and I describe the widespread complacency that I address in the third section of this paper.

2.1. Two pessimisms

One form of pessimism doubts the prospect of nuclear disarmament as a general goal. The idea that disarmament is ‘idealistic, but naively unrealistic,’ reflects this doubt.⁶ Disarmament may seem unrealistic because states have an incentive to maintain their military capabilities to deter adversaries; because so many nuclear weapons exist that zero is nowhere in sight; because one ‘rogue’ state will always want to hold onto the nuclear bargaining chip; because states prioritize relative-gains considerations in national security; or because nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented, so they will never disappear. Whatever the reason, the argument concludes that disarmament is unrealistic, so there is no reason to support a movement doomed to failure. I call this first view *disarmament pessimism*.

Disarmament pessimism suffers from two significant flaws. The first is that it purports to predict international affairs with absolute certainty. The claim that disarmament is *impossible* requires a kind of clairvoyance that no human possesses. This predictive capacity is even more difficult when it comes to dramatic changes in the international arena. Very few experts in the mid-1980s, for instance, thought the cold war could possibly end before 2000 (Blechman 2010). We can make

predictions based on the best available evidence, but those predictions involve probabilistic terms, not absolute ones. The disarmament pessimist's claim requires an absolute prediction. Otherwise, it is not a reason against supporting the disarmament movement. If disarmament is highly unlikely, but still possible, then activists have a strong reason to campaign for disarmament: without their help, the goal remains distant. As long as disarmament is possible, we can compare the probability of disarmament's success to the disastrous risks of failure. At the very least, there is little cost to trying: we would be no worse off if the movement failed to achieve its objectives than we are in the status quo.

The second flaw with disarmament pessimism is that it relies on a narrow view of state interests. Disarmament pessimism holds that states will never give up nuclear weapons because there will always be military threats that make nuclear restraint unsafe. This view assumes that the absence of military threats is the *only* reason for nuclear restraint, but security interests do not fully explain some important cases. If security were the only concern behind nuclear-weapons acquisition, India would have initiated a crash weapons program or consistently sought nuclear-weapons guarantees from other states in response to the 1964 Chinese nuclear test (Sagan 1996–1997, 65). Domestic politics better explains India's weaponization: military strategists and foreign affairs officials were excluded from Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's decision-making, and the Gandhi administration faced a severe decline in popular support until it announced its nuclear test, which restored public confidence (68). This restoration was relatively brief, however, which may indicate that political officials gain less sustainable support than they expect to receive from weaponization decisions. Moreover, Indira Gandhi's son, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, later denounced nuclear weapons and supported their elimination at the UN General Assembly in 1988, indicating willingness to disarm despite the earlier, seemingly popular decision to weaponize (Rajiv Gandhi 1988). Domestic politics may also provide a stronger explanation than security interests for South Africa's disarmament and for Argentina's and Brazil's shifts to nuclear restraint in the 1980s (Sagan 1996–1997, 70–1). International norms may also play a stronger role than security interests in some cases. For instance, France's decision to acquire nuclear weapons was based more heavily on the pursuit of global clout than on threats to French security (79). Likewise, Ukraine's decision to enter the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a nonweapons state contributed to its positive international standing, despite the fear of Russian expansionism (80–1). At best, these cases suggest that social movements can dramatically affect nuclear-weapons policy through influence on domestic politics and international norms. At the very least, they suggest that security interests are not the only explanation behind the bomb. The unique position of the USA is important here. As the world's leading democracy, the US government faces both domestic and international pressure. While security concerns may sometimes override such pressure, it is difficult for the USA to ignore such pressure outright (Koh 2003, 1527).

Another form of pessimism focuses on the role of popular movements in the pursuit of abolition. Even if nuclear disarmament is possible, one might doubt that popular movements have the power to move governments in the right direction. George Perkovich and James Acton, for instance, leave popular opinion out of the picture: their 'enormous renovation project' of abolition is a project for 'experts from a representative range of states' (Perkovich and Acton 2009a, 131). In their view, popular opinion may slow down the disarmament process and create

‘dilemmas that are intractable or at least extremely difficult to resolve’ when public opinion vastly differs throughout the international arena (Perkovich and Acton 2009b, 323). Public opinion can turn against disarmament by accusing abolitionist governments of weakness and carelessness. This danger is especially likely in the USA because Republicans could characterize Democratic lawmakers as ‘soft’ on national security – a tactic that the Bush administration employed effectively for a sustained period. In any case, Perkovich and Acton believe that a popular movement will not make or break the pursuit of abolition: political elites have the power, resources, and knowhow to make decisions. I call this second view *movement pessimism*.

The historical record indicates that the disarmament movement has immense political potential. The disarmament movement has constrained decision-making even in the most pro-nuclear-weapons administrations. In suspending US nuclear testing over objections by the Defense Department, President Eisenhower understood that nuclear weapons were powerful elements of national security, but they were not as powerful as ‘world opinion today in obliging the USA to follow certain lines of policy’ (Wittner 2009, 80). The disarmament movement constrained Eisenhower’s decision-making by attaching, in John Foster Dulles’s words, ‘political losses’ to ‘slight military gains’ (Ibid.). The movement had similar success in constraining President Nixon, who attributed his decision not to use nuclear weapons against North Vietnam to the threat of political – as opposed to nuclear – retaliation. Nixon complained that ‘the resulting domestic and international uproar would have damaged our foreign policy on all fronts’ (111). Perhaps the greatest shift occurred in the Reagan administration. President Reagan entered office with no qualms about threatening the use of nuclear weapons against the Soviet ‘Evil Empire,’ but the disarmament movement forced a 180° shift (Knopf 1997, 146). By the end of Reagan’s second term, the president declared, ‘Our dream is to see the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the earth’ (Wittner 2009, 176). While Soviet cooperation from Mikhail Gorbachev surely played a role, the domestic strength of the movement pressured the administration to modify its nuclear hard line (Ibid.).

If the disarmament movement had a constraining effect on pro-nuclear administrations, it is likely to make great advancements with the help of presidents who are sympathetic to the movement. President Obama’s openness to disarmament echoes a similar sentiment expressed by the Carter administration. President Carter was the first president to enter office with such openness, and officials in the Carter White House and State Department often met with leaders of the disarmament movement (Wittner 2009, 129). The president and the movement had a mutually reinforcing relationship: abolitionist groups mobilized essential support for the president’s agenda (particularly for SALT II), and the White House rewarded their support with pro-nuclear-arms-control policies. Perhaps the Obama administration will engage in a similar symbiosis with the disarmament movement. Success is even more likely with Russian cooperation, and President Medvedev’s signing of the New START pact is a modest step forward. Mikhail Gorbachev’s rise to power in 1985 was ‘the final ingredient necessary for major advances in nuclear disarmament’ (177). Medvedev may not share the abolitionist vision to the same extent that Gorbachev did, but the historical lesson is that Russian cooperation helps boost the disarmament movement in the USA. The reason is simple: if people believe that peace activism will have a positive impact, they are more likely to participate and to

continue participating (Toussaint 2009, 42). In this sense, political factors – in this case, political leaders' sympathy for groups that oppose nuclear weapons – not only steer policy towards disarmament, but also increase the space for popular movements by creating a shared vision of success. The negotiation of SALT II and the cancellation of the neutron bomb, for instance, inspired hope in the movement in the 1970s (Wittner 2009, 140). In this sense, optimism about the disarmament movement is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Believing in the movement's success makes that belief more likely to come to fruition, and success feeds on success.

2.2. *Complacency*

Complacency is the Grendel of the disarmament movement. The signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty led to a widespread belief that the movement had succeeded, so the public traded focus on disarmament for more pressing issues, namely Vietnam (Wittner 2009, 112). Similarly, arms-reductions agreements and the end of the cold war slowed down the movement because activists felt that they could relax after victory (193). The trend is that activism declines when people believe they are safe in the status quo. In the 1980s, only when the public saw 'nuclear weapons enthusiasts controlling major governments and talking glibly of nuclear war' did the peace movement mobilize to unprecedented heights (141). Understandably, people only care when there is reason to care, and they become complacent when they see no threat. There is no 'secret weapon' with which to combat complacency: the task of gaining salience is to make people aware of the threat such that they care (without the use of ineffective and unsustainable scare tactics).⁷

If the key target is the American public, disarmament activists have a 300-million person audience to persuade. Fortunately, the movement does not require 100% support; it only requires, at first, critical mass – the threshold beyond which an idea consistently reaches ordinary people from various sources.⁸ When ideas or innovations gain acceptance by 15–20% of a population, they tend to 'diffuse' through peer communication networks, leading to widespread acceptance through ideological momentum (Rogers 2001). The most important task – and, not surprisingly, the most difficult – is gaining the critical mass necessary to create ideological momentum. In the next section, I provide strategic recommendations for disarmament groups to activate the public by gaining critical mass.

3. Strategic recommendations

3.1. *Social networks and marketing*

Expanding social networks is key to increasing participation in social movements. One of the most common ways of getting involved in a movement is having a personal connection to another activist (Toussaint 2009, 53). Social ties increase participation, so there is strength in numbers. Communication channels through mass media are effective means of spreading ideas, but interpersonal connections are stronger channels for forming and changing attitudes: people generally choose to adopt ideas or innovations more because of peer influence than because of expert recommendations (Rogers 2001). Social networks thus play a uniquely important role in gaining critical mass. There is something distinctly persuasive about hearing an idea from someone much like oneself – namely, that if one's peer has adopted

an idea, one might also have reason to adopt that same idea. This peer effect leads people to more seriously consider the relevant idea.

A successful movement strategy should distinguish between formal and informal networks because each kind warrants a different approach. Formal networks involve other organizations or groups, such as churches, political parties, peace organizations, and sports teams. Disarmament advocates can capitalize on formal networks by allying with other organizations. Instead of building a volunteer base from scratch, organizers can ‘borrow’ membership from other groups. Informal networks are unofficial, interpersonal connections. Informal networks are a natural means of growth for organizations, but groups can more deliberately capitalize on informal networks by asking members to bring friends to events or by hosting social events. Disarmament advocates should consciously recruit from formal and informal networks in their local communities to increase growth rates.

When it comes to nuclear disarmament (a national agenda and a global issue), the relevant network seems too vast. How can a movement target the entire US population? Disarmament groups need a way to reduce the relevant network size and more effectively gain salience. This challenge, though, is not unique to the disarmament movement. Fox and Kotler’s research on 10 years of social marketing finds significant ‘public pressure to attempt to reach the whole market rather than to zero in on the best target groups’ (1980, 31). Smart businesses resist this pressure by way of market segmentation: they introduce a new product to a smaller population, hoping to initiate diffusion by building critical mass in the smaller market.⁹ Market segmentation lies at the heart of marketing strategy, ‘to lead each institution to search for a more meaningful position in the larger market’ (Kotler 1979, 44). Martin Hellman advocates this kind of approach in his nuclear risk awareness program at Stanford University. This strategy is more manageable than the whole-market impulse, and it looks promising. Social marketing has successfully introduced family planning in developing countries to lower the world fertility rate, produced behavioral change to prevent heart disease, and encouraged parents to get their infants immunized (Fox and Kotler 1980, 28–9). This focus on market segmentation may shed light on other elements of social-marketing strategy, namely, the role of the Internet. The Internet makes global advertising possible and may attract groups to spread their message worldwide. Marketing research, however, consistently supports the most ancient diffusion strategy, word of mouth, and indicates that the Internet is a less significant factor than peer connections and traditional brochures (Weaver and Lawton 2002, 279).

In short, disarmament activists should resist the pressure to tackle the whole market. They should focus on building critical mass by capitalizing on social networks within market segments. Most market segments are relatively small – a single university, town, or online community – but tackling smaller networks is key to local public mobilization. After all, only the president is elected by national ballot. Building critical mass in small market segments is an essential part of movement strategy and gaining political influence. Some organizations have focused on national breadth without localized market segments. The MoveOn family of organizations is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit that unites causes across the country to support progressive policy change, and MoveOn has gained over 5 million members by pioneering social marketing techniques in the Internet age. Disarmament activists should participate in national organizations like MoveOn, but their primary focus

should be on localized market segments – their own university, town, or online community.

3.2. Youth

One reason for the disarmament movement's decline in the late 1990s is the 'noticeable graying' of abolitionist groups (Wittner 2009, 217). The youth section of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament disappeared by 1998, and only a small minority of members in disarmament-related organizations are under 25 years old (Edwards 1997, 234). The American youth's failure to continue the activist legacy of the Vietnam era is not surprising. In *Millennials Rising*, Howe and Strauss (2000, 43–4) find the rising generation of American youth to be smart, safe, optimistic, and cooperative, but hesitant to challenge the status quo and skeptical of politics. Future leaders 'have no time to read newspapers, follow national politics, or get involved in crusades' (Brooks 2001). Millennial youth are less likely than their parents' generation was to declare their differences in social or political movements (12). The reason is that young Americans today tend to defer to authority, not to challenge it.

Disarmament advocates must overcome this tendency by focusing their strategies on the American youth. The decline of youth participation in the 1990s coincided with the decline of the disarmament movement, and this correlation is not a coincidence. The strength of youth organization has historically been essential to the growth of broader political organizations (Kriesi et al. 1992, 235). Young people are particularly key to this issue because disarmament is such a lengthy process. Moreover, youth participation has a formative impact on political beliefs. J.M. Fendrich and E.S. Krauss report former student activists' behavior and beliefs in the USA in the 13 years following their initial involvement (DeMartini 1983, 199). Former activists were markedly more radical or liberal than nonactivists. Fifty-four percent of former activists were self-identified 'radicals,' and 25% were 'liberals.' By contrast, 57% of nonactivists were 'moderates,' and 30% were 'conservatives.' These figures suggest that activism has an impact on the formation of political beliefs, which means that a youth movement could affect salience over time because such beliefs frame their perception of policy issues. Fendrich and Krauss's study leaves an open question about the causal direction of these figures: perhaps Americans who form liberal and radical beliefs at a young age join political movements and maintain those beliefs over time. This argument sounds plausible, but further research gives reason to believe otherwise. In *Generations and Politics*, M. K. Jennings and R.G. Niemi find that former activists not only identify with the Democratic party at a higher rate than nonactivists (before college), but also that their beliefs shift further left after more years of activism (after college) (Ibid. 201). The key finding is that this shift does not obtain for nonactivists with Democratic identification at the outset, so activism is a statistically significant factor in the formation and transformation of political beliefs. This trend is not exclusive to liberal-leaning students: former activists who start out with Republican identification (before college) end up less likely to support Republican nominees (after college), whereas nonactivists become drastically more likely to support Republican nominees (Ibid. 202). The implication is that disarmament advocates should focus on the American youth because the movement can have a formative impact on their political beliefs.

Advertising is critical to gaining youth support. As one young activist from Seattle said in a Youth Service America report, 'It doesn't matter how many organizations exist if you don't know about them' (Felix 2004). To overcome this barrier, advocates should engage in four types of youth outreach. The first type is *interactive advertising*, primarily through the Internet. Youth outreach organizations such as At The Table and the Freechild Project host online chat forums for young people to discuss social and political challenges, and for organizers to share strategies and techniques for gaining youth support (Ibid.). Disarmament advocates should not only establish online chat forums for young people, but also take advantage of the current opportunities that other organizations have started. The second type is *cross-turf networking*. Organizations with 'siloed activities' – e.g. particular missions and mission-directed activities – tend to compete with other organizations for funding and participants (Ibid.). Disarmament activists should strive for better collaboration and communication by working with other organizations specifically on the goal of youth development. Such efforts would overcome the turf issues of siloed activities, with the added benefit of gaining youth support through youth-directed collaboration. The third type is what Ginwright and Cammarota (2002, 82) call *social justice youth development*. Ginwright and Cammarota advocate a focus on marginalized and underprivileged youth of different ethnic backgrounds, because young participants in social and political organizations tend to be homogenous in terms of ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic background (Felix 2004). Disarmament advocates should join forces with youth outreach programs that focus on underprivileged youth not only to gain support from those populations, but also to benefit them through a hands-on approach to civic education.

The fourth type is *cultural outreach*. In response to the passage of California Proposition 21 (2000), which increased criminal penalties for juvenile offenders, youth organizations helped to organize hip-hop concerts to promote awareness and mobilize disenfranchised youth. One hip-hop artist in the Bay Area noted,

Culturally, a lot of young people do not read newspapers or even if you pass them a flyer, they might read it but it's not as real to them because it's an old way of organizing. So hip-hop can bring us new tools to organize with. (Ginwright and James 2002, 40–1)

Disarmament advocates should seek youth support by organizing cultural events with politically minded hip-hop artists. Hip-hop artists have served similar roles in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Golan, Subliminal, Iron Sheik), the Black Nationalist movement (Tupac Shakur, Public Enemy, Paris), US presidential campaigns (P. Diddy, Eminem), and even Iran's presidential election of 2009 (Shahin Najafi, Salome, Erfan, Hichkas) (Forman and Neal 2004, 7). Hip-hop artists such as Immortal Technique and Dead Prez have independently expressed opposition to nuclear weapons, so disarmament advocates have a place to start.

Cultural outreach is not simply another means of youth development. It is essential to the politics of the Millennial Generation. Bang (2003) identifies the Millennial Generations' new modes of political participation as 'culture governance' – nontraditional avenues whereby everyday citizens participate outside of formal politics. User-generated content on Internet media sites is a revealing example of culture governance: ordinary people express themselves and influence others on websites without full-time commitment to professional, party politics. This type of engagement reflects

the Millennial Generation's political tendencies. As one of Bang's respondents reported,

I've seen how young people over the course of the last decade organize and involve themselves very differently. The fact of the matter is that young people are actually very engaged. The thing is that they are engaged in ways that the older generations consider unconventional. It's often a matter of getting involved in a concrete project, and then engaging oneself 100% in it for a short period and then they stop. They don't participate in the long term. (23)

Cultural governance involves short-term, individualistic, project-oriented, and non-state forms of civic engagement. American youth tend to be apathetic about politicians and political parties, but not about political issues. This tendency is a good sign for the disarmament movement, because it indicates that young people's support may be independent of their perception of political realities. The bad sign is that activists' engagement may wane easily, which is a serious problem for a long-term movement. But the tendency for short-term commitment simply trades off with increased numbers and involvement in a greater variety of issues, thereby expanding networks and peer connections.

Noncultural outlets for political expression are also important. Student chapters of national and international organizations are key to gaining salience because they create stable sites for youth engagement, but advocates must formulate strategies to increase representation at colleges and universities. These strategies should start with high-school communities to 'hook' students before they arrive at college and make other extracurricular commitments. Competitive high-school debate is one place to start because it features a close, yet large, community with educated, curious, and impressionable students. High-school debaters with national-circuit experience enter college with friends at other universities, making cross-chapter collaboration more likely. As a high-school debate coach and former competitor, this author has never seen an activist on any issue discuss her movement at a debate tournament, workshop, or summer training institute. Disarmament advocates should seek support from thousands of young leaders at national debate tournaments (at both high-school and college levels), and they should visit educational workshops and institutes to discuss nuclear-weapons issues, which are common in debate. This kind of involvement would be mutually beneficial to both activists and debaters, and it would set a precedent for outreach to other communities, including high-school journalism, science competitions, and Model UN conferences.

In short, youth involvement in the disarmament movement is both a possible and effective means of gaining salience and support. Some organizations have already been successful in developing youth leadership: the Student Peace Action Network has over 130 chapters and affiliates, and Global Zero created over 50 chapters in 10 countries in its first two years. But there is much more to be done.

3.3. *Justification: morality, law, and security*

Not all reasons for nuclear disarmament are equally valid, nor are they all equally compelling from a potential activist's perspective. Zia Mian has noted that the security-based case for disarmament raises the question of 'what, if anything, could fill the nuclear-weapon-shaped hole' in national defense (Mian 2009). Disarmament on grounds of security alone may lead policy-makers to seek substitutes for nuclear

weapons. Even if states gave up nuclear weapons, this search for reassurance would preserve the desire to reacquire them or develop more dangerous weaponry.

As an extension of Mian's argument in terms of civil society, the security-based case for disarmament limits groups' potential by giving too much ground to disarmament pessimists and to those who disagree outright with the desirability of disarmament. In response to the claim that disarmament would create a more secure international environment than the unsafe status quo, the disarmament pessimist could doubt the prospects of international cooperation or collective security: even if disarmament is desirable, she could argue, it is impossible within the security model of state behavior. This point illustrates why theories matter, not only just as lenses through which to view policy, but also as persuasive devices and obstacles for a popular movement. The central justifications for nuclear weapons rely on the framework of national interests and security, so the security-based case for disarmament forces citizens to choose between the movement's arguments and the state's arguments (Mian, 298). Some citizens may choose more wisely than others, but the point remains – the security-based case for disarmament may face limitations in gaining popular support and may reinforce ideas about the primacy of security.

Unlike arguments based on national security, the moral and legal cases for disarmament are universally applicable. The claim that abolition increases national security is contingent on the security interests of each state: its truth varies by nation. Disarmament could have vastly different effects on states' military capabilities relative to each other. Thus, if security is a matter of relative gains, some states have more reason than other states to accept the security-based case for disarmament.¹⁰ On the other hand, the claim that possession of nuclear weapons is immoral because such weapons give states the power to exterminate the human race does not depend on the state in question.¹¹ Likewise, the claim that disarmament is a legal obligation under Article VI of the NPT and the 1946 UN General Assembly Resolution for 'the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction' applies equally to all member states of the NPT and of the UN, respectively.¹² The moral and legal arguments for abolition shift the burden of proof onto the state to justify an immoral and illegal national security strategy (Zhenqiang 2009). Toussaint's (2009, 37) recent study of the contemporary peace movement shows that moral and legal concerns are, by far, the most common reasons for activists' involvement with organizations like Peace with Justice and Primarily Peace. Disarmament groups cannot succeed without tapping into these concerns. The security-based case for disarmament is an argument that abolitionists should make, but it is insufficient to build the requisite momentum for lasting success.

William Wilberforce's campaign to abolish the slave trade in the late 1700s and early 1800s is a helpful precedent here. Thanks to Frank von Hippel for suggesting this point. Wilberforce, an Evangelical Christian, was primarily concerned with the immorality of the slave trade (Piper 2006, 35), but he and other abolitionists faced all sorts of other arguments, including the economic importance of the slave trade to Liverpool's economy and the importance of slave ships to train sailors who would later join the British navy. The abolitionists won these disputes, but their economic arguments were peripheral to the central, humanitarian concerns (Byers 2004, 535). The disarmament movement could follow Wilberforce's precedent in its focus on morality first.

But there is reason to doubt this strategy. A recent report by the USA in the World Initiative (USITW) assesses research projects by American Environics, Topos

Partnership (on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists), and Greenberg, Quinlan, and Rosner. Their research indicates that, with the right policy recommendations and rhetorical framing, Americans will support, on their own, the elimination of nuclear weapons. The biggest obstacle, however, is the deeply engrained perception that nuclear weapons are the ultimate protective ‘shield’ against security threats – not just another weapon in the US arsenal, but a particularly effective one (USITW 2009). Their research also finds a widespread tendency to personify international threats in interpersonal terms: ‘Iran hates us for who we are,’ ‘North Korea is a bad country,’ or ‘We cannot trust Russia.’ This tendency makes the public more receptive to the weapons that keep ‘us’ safe from ‘them.’

More importantly, however, this tendency has a negative impact on broader public reasoning. USITW’s crucial finding is that ‘when people are operating in threat mode, any suggestion that they should put principles over safety will be rejected as, at best, a nice idea that is unrealistic, and at worst, a dangerously irresponsible delusion’ (USITW 2009, 5). This rejection affects the movement’s strategy by restricting the range of argumentation about morality, legality, long-term consequences, and consequences for allies or nonnuclear-weapons states. According to an Angus Reid Public Opinion poll (2010), only 22% of US citizens support the idea that nuclear weapons are ‘morally wrong.’ Interestingly, 61% of respondents favor an international agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons, so their support must derive from nonmoral justifications. Even when ordinary citizens believe moral and legal arguments, their instinctive response may be to side with the status quo and prioritize immediate safety. Accordingly, USITW suggests that disarmament advocates reframe the issue as a matter of risk to global stability. A risk-based framework still trades with the currency of security, but it avoids the ‘us-versus-them’ mentality. The idea is that the risk of nuclear weapons lies not primarily with who has them, but with the weapons themselves; nuclear weapons create more risks than they reduce (USITW 2009, 6).

There is a way to reconcile USITW’s findings with Mian’s approach: moral and legal arguments are strong for people already inclined to campaign for peace and for those who resist the us-versus-them mentality, but they risk rejection by other people. There is no single ‘best’ justification for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Argumentative strategy depends, most fundamentally, on the audience. Leaving security out of the discussion is a dangerous strategy for most audiences, but so is an exclusive focus on security. The risk-reduction framework, combined with moral and legal arguments that appeal to people’s basic beliefs, should be the baseline strategy. This strategy preserves the content of the security-based arguments for disarmament, but it changes the argumentative framework to avoid ceding too much ground to pessimism.

3.4. *Intermediate steps*

In the 2007 Carnegie International Nonproliferation Conference, outgoing British foreign secretary Margaret Beckett extended the Wilberforce parallel to an argument about the goals of the disarmament movement:

Would [Wilberforce] have achieved half as much, would he have inspired the same fervor in others if he had to set out to ‘regulate’ or ‘reduce’ the slave trade rather than abolish it? I doubt it ... So too with nuclear weapons. Believing that the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons is possible can act as a spur for action on disarmament. Believing, at whatever level, that it is not, is the surest path to inaction. (Guillemin 2007)

Beckett's argument reflects my view on pessimism in Section 2: the belief in disarmament's possibility is a self-fulfilling prophecy, and success breeds success. But it does not follow that the disarmament movement should match Wilberforce's ambition with a focus on the end-goal of full elimination of nuclear weapons.

All three studies featured in the USITW report agree that advocates should begin by advocating reductions, rather than full elimination. Explicitly stating a goal of complete elimination at the outset leads to skepticism about related proposals, even those that focus on reductions (USITW 2009, 10). Most people still hold to the Cold War-era belief that nuclear weapons are the strongest deterrent against conventional and nuclear attack, so they are skeptical of full elimination. This is not to say that the movement should give up on elimination as a goal or discussion point. Rather, advocates should generally avoid *starting* the discussion with that goal. This suggestion would not decrease the salience of disarmament because, according to the Topos Partnership report, the risk-reduction framework 'leads many subjects to talk about zero on their own.'¹³ Advocates should aim to increase support for reductions as a first step and to increase the credibility of the full-elimination proposal.

But advocates should not excessively soften their pitch. Two of the studies in the USITW report advocate the 'sufficiency' argument – the idea that a smaller arsenal could still deter attacks, rendering current arsenals excessive and wasteful. The appeal of this argument is that it does not require people to give up the received wisdom of nuclear weapons as America's best defense in a dangerous world. USITW rejects this recommendation, and for good reason. If the goal is to eventually get to zero, then the sufficiency argument undermines this goal by granting legitimacy and purpose to the existence of nuclear weapons. The sufficiency argument may be useful in persuading highly reluctant citizens to support reductions in the short term, but it is a bad strategy from the perspective of the disarmament movement's goals. It also undermines the risk-reduction framework by modifying the claim that nuclear weapons are a greater liability than an asset. The sufficiency argument makes this claim contingent on the *number* of weapons, whereas the strength of the risk-reduction approach is that it pertains directly to the *existence* of nuclear weapons.

Again, the strategy may depend on the audience. The sufficiency argument is helpful for audiences who are unlikely to support full elimination anyways; and focusing on full elimination is helpful for audiences who are already involved in peace movements and predisposed to accept that focus. The strategy should also depend on a particular group's stated role and objectives. Global Zero cannot just leave out the 'Zero' while staying true to its purposes and principles. But as a strategic baseline, advocates should start the discussion with a focus on concrete, intermediate steps within a risk-reduction framework. One way to achieve this baseline across groups is to establish coalitions among arms-control groups, peace groups, and think tanks to moderate their image, to attract members who need to be eased into the idea, and to increase their scope of public influence.

3.5. *Global Zero? A lesson from the Nuclear Freeze campaign*

My final recommendation relates to a common rallying point for disarmament activists. In the 1980s, that rallying point was the Nuclear Freeze. In the 2010s, the new rallying point may be Global Zero. These rallying points are best understood as political campaign strategies, rather than particular arms-control initiatives. A literal, policy-oriented reading of the Nuclear Freeze as an arms-control initiative would

seem puzzling. Why would President Reagan's critics in the peace movement advocate a modest freeze – the status quo – when Reagan proposed 'truly substantial reductions' to make nuclear weapons 'impotent and obsolete'?¹⁴ The answer is that the freeze was not an arms-control policy initiative, but rather a rallying point for the peace movement – in J. Michael Hogan's words, a 'powerful metaphor that rejuvenated their organizations, enhanced their fund-raising efforts, and generated abundant and sympathetic news coverage' (Hogan 1994, 13). But Hogan takes this argument even further, arguing that the freeze movement devalued the intelligence of the average voter by waging a war of 'images, slogans, and bandwagon appeals' (7). In Hogan's view, the freeze movement was apolitical and, therefore, undemocratic. I want to suggest, on the contrary, that unifying metaphors such as the Nuclear Freeze and Global Zero are vital to the disarmament movement.

The use of 'images, slogans, and bandwagon appeals' is not mutually exclusive with political substance. In fact, it is an important strategy in a country where citizens increasingly use television or online news media (which thrive on entertainment-based advertising) instead of traditional print journalism. Regardless of whether the trend towards digital media is good or bad, the disarmament movement cannot simply ignore it. Advocates give up nothing by capitalizing on new media and entertainment, but they give up much by alienating the average citizen. On average, shifts in news media 'account for nearly half of the variance in opinion change' (Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987, 38). Furthermore, the freeze movement's bilateral emphasis and moderate proposal were key to its wide appeal and support in Congress (Cortright and Pagnucco 1997, 93). Without the freeze metaphor, it is unclear how the small peace-movement constituency could have mobilized such broad support. As Dr. Randall Forsberg asked as Director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies,

Do you realize that if all these groups concentrated on one goal for a period of time long enough for us to be able to build up a movement, but short term enough to be in the foreseeable future, that we could probably do it? (Leavitt 1983, 15)

The lack of a unified message was a persistent problem for the peace movement, and the freeze proposal addressed that problem, at least for some time (11).

Hogan's broad criticism of the entire freeze movement is misguided because it underestimates the need for a unified message and popular appeal. Hogan does, however, point to a general vulnerability – the tendency for mass media to reduce nuclear-weapons issues into feckless platitudes. But that tendency is caused not by the Nuclear Freeze or Global Zero metaphors themselves, but by the lack of prominent leadership to control media coverage. *New York Times* articles about the freeze attributed the movement to 'citizen concern,' rather than the actual freeze organization, thereby converting the freeze metaphor into a 'generalized desire for arms control' (Rojecki 1997). Popular media tended to ignore the political substance of the freeze movement, because they saw it as a loose proposal without prominent leadership. On a *CBS Evening News* broadcast in 1982, Dan Rather analyzed the Reagan administration's resistance to the freeze proposal. The conservative Hudson Institute's Herman Kahn was his 'supporting expert':

KAHN: If we feel that our lives are being threatened sufficiently, we can rearrange our expenses.

RATHER: If we freeze now, there is no way to catch up, no way to ease the nightmare of a Russian first strike. If we keep nuclear weapons at the present level, there is no incentive for either side to negotiate reductions.¹⁵

This exchange captures the general milieu of the broadcast – a popular news anchor and an expert sharing assumptions about the freeze proposal and Reagan’s window-of-vulnerability argument.

Similarly, Bruce Morton’s CBS report on the New York City demonstration in June 1982 left nuclear freeze experts out of the discussion. Morton focused his discussion of the demographics on veterans of the 1960s anti-war movement, and he did not include Dr. Forsberg’s substantive message. The only words from Dr. Forsberg’s speech that CBS included in its broadcast were,

Until the arms race ends, until we have real peace with real justice, we will not go home and be quiet; we will go home and organize. Stop the arms race, Reagan; if you don’t we will remember in November. (Rojecki, 114)

New York Times coverage was not much better. Only about 15% of its story focused on the speakers’ political message (Ibid.). Most of it was dedicated to the rally’s size, logistics, and symbolic balloons. Accordingly, the media coverage of the event reduced the freeze proposal to an ‘apple pie issue’ that both Democrats and Republicans could support without risking disapproval from voters and lobbies (Ibid. 123). Brown (1982) noted that the language of the freeze proposal ‘is not that of an agreement – it is more nearly a set of principles.’ This deliberate attempt to reduce the freeze to an abstract idea reflects the movement’s general vulnerability. Brown did not even once mention the freeze organization, Dr. Forsberg, or any other leader of the movement. He did mention the freeze resolution introduced in Congress, but he criticized the effect as ‘almost entirely symbolic’ (Ibid.).

Prominent leadership is essential to the success of the disarmament movement because leaders can help prevent biased media coverage or, more dangerously, lack of coverage. As Toussaint puts it, leaders give social movements a ‘public face’ (2009, 117). One of Toussaint’s respondents expressed discontent with the contemporary peace movement’s lack of strong leadership:

There is no head of the peace movement ... We’re not in the mainstream news, and until we get organized and really serious, we’re not gonna be in the mainstream news. What do we need to do about the lack of leadership? Take all these organizations and get all their leaders to sit down and talk about forming one organization. If we fix the fragmentation and lack of leadership, everything else will fall into place. (118)

Some activists see virtue in decentralization, but such decentralization is compatible with prominent leadership. Public leaders of the disarmament movement need not impose top-down mandates to control all organizations, but leaders should exist and be active in the public eye. Without prominent leadership, disarmament organizations risk public invisibility. What kinds of leaders can check against this vulnerability? Global Zero’s strategy has been to gain signatories in various countries with different backgrounds in diplomacy, science, entertainment, the military, and domestic politics. This strategy has been effective at increasing salience and support in a very short time frame, and it may mark the difference between brief popularity and lasting momentum.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented an overview of the disarmament movement's function and direction. Ultimately, the support of the American people is necessary (although not sufficient) to the success of the disarmament movement, at least in the USA. Policy-makers do not and should not underestimate the constraining and persuasive effects of public opinion. These effects face many obstacles – misrepresentation by Congressional staff, the influence of lobbies, complacency about nuclear weapons, and pessimism about disarmament and social movements in general. These obstacles, however, can be overcome. Public support for disarmament and the salience of nuclear-weapons issues is growing because an increasing number of people worry about the existence of nuclear weapons. There is reason to believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons is possible and that a social movement can play a constitutive role in their elimination.

To help reach critical mass, I have provided strategic recommendations for organizations like Global Zero. Advocates should (a) capitalize on social networks, both formal and informal, by way of market segmentation; (b) focus on the American youth – the Millennial Generation – through cultural outreach; (c) develop an adaptive strategy for persuading the public with moral and legal arguments, and reframe security-based considerations within a risk-reduction framework; (d) focus on intermediate steps; and (e) influence media coverage with prominent leadership and a Nuclear Freeze-style unifying metaphor. The disarmament movement requires 'a public education campaign that pursues short-term policy gains while advancing the long-term objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons' (USITW 2009, 2). But what exactly does this 'public education campaign' require? I wish to conclude with some thoughts on the connection between the disarmament movement and peace education.

Disarmament advocates should both learn from and contribute to the broader project of peace education. This connection is not new: the danger of nuclear war led to the creation and proliferation of new advancements in peace education in the 1980s, and, before that, teachers in 1950s Japan led a peace education campaign known as 'A-bomb education' (Harris 2004). My argument for strengthening this connection has to do with the causes of nuclear complacency. I have suggested that many people are complacent about nuclear weapons because they underestimate the risk, but my conclusion goes further than that. Ordinary citizens, policy-makers, and academic risk analysts have largely neglected a serious understanding of the risk of full-scale nuclear war (Hellman 2008). It appears that neither Congress nor any agency of the executive branch has called for an objective assessment of the risk (Hellman 2011). And even those who do (or think they do) understand the risk are subject to a number of cognitive biases that impede their judgments about prioritizing and responding to it (Yudkowsky 2008).

But that is not the full story behind nuclear complacency. A disposition to underestimate or ignore military risks has its own causes, and the roots of complacency are contextually embedded in culture and history. Peace education aims to cultivate virtues that are helpful in gaining salience for disarmament, including critical thinking, cooperation, reflection, kindness, and civic education (Harris 2004, 16). By focusing on both the individual and social levels of peace, peace education motivates a collective disposition to live with integrity and seek alternatives to vio-

lence. A public with that kind of disposition would care more about risks including, but certainly not limited to, nuclear weapons.

My advocacy is compatible with a wide range of pedagogical views and social views about the root causes of complacency. Although I have presented strategies for activists to persuade the public, I am not committed to the idea that educators should be those activists. I see much to admire in the normative element of activist pedagogy (Fassbinder 2007), but there is also a danger that activism becomes (in some contexts) indoctrinating.¹⁶ I cannot here discuss that debate, nor do I need to do so. Any effective form of peace education is conducive to the goals of the disarmament movement. When it comes to issues of public policy, people should come to their own conclusions. The problem-posing and question-raising directions of peace pedagogy, combined with better access to information about nuclear weapons, can help shape the kind of citizenry needed to motivate nuclear disarmament. Peace education may, therefore, be a prerequisite to successful disarmament activism. Even small pedagogical gains are crucial for the disarmament movement because success feeds on success. Ultimately, believing in the movement's potential helps to realize that potential at every step of the way: the disarmament movement is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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Notes

1. I am grateful to Frank von Hippel for reminding me to address this obstacle.
2. These figures do not include the risk of nuclear terrorism, which 47% of respondents said was at least slightly likely in 2009. They also do not include 'not applicable' answers or respondents who were not asked the question.
3. One likely explanation is that the American public became more worried about security threats after the 11 September attacks, and these concerns could have been influenced by the Bush Administration's focus on nuclear terrorism, Iraq, and Iran. But the above figures are specific to war between nuclear-weapons states, not terrorism or horizontal proliferation.
4. This figure is still a minority, but it is a heavily qualified condition (in the next decade), so the number is relatively high. Seventy-four percent in April 2010 disagreed that the total elimination of all nuclear weapons is possible, although 50% said that total elimination would be more desirable than the status quo. This disparity supports my hypothesis that pessimism about political possibilities is a greater obstacle than the question of desirability.
5. Outright disagreement is certainly an obstacle, but for the purposes of this paper, I assume that disarmament is desirable. This assumption is reasonable for closely examining the questions of possibility and potential (Sections 1 and 2), but the desirability question will become important in Section 3.
6. Letter to the Editor of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, quoted in Krieger (2006).
7. Wittner (2009, 51) describing the British population's immediate reaction to the prospect of nuclear war – 'to wish not to hear about it.'
8. See Hellman (2010).
9. Conversation with Martin Hellman, via email on 10 April 2010.
10. Regarding relative-gains considerations, see Mearsheimer (1994–1995).
11. See Goodin (1985).
12. Qtd. in Mian, 298.

13. Topos Partnership, on behalf of the Union of Concerned Scientists, 'From asset to liability: developing a message strategy on nuclear weapons,' (2009). Qtd. in USITW, 4.
14. Ronald Reagan, 'Address to the nation on defense and national security, 23 March 1983,' in Ronald Reagan (1983, 443).
15. *CBS Evening News*, 20 May 1982. Quoted in Rojecki, 112.
16. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer from the *Journal of Peace Education* for this suggestion.

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