

# Executive Memorandum

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## ABOLISH THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

It is time to shut down the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA). Now that the Cold War is over, America no longer needs a separate bureaucracy dedicated to reducing nuclear arms. The United States already has arms control treaties in place that will take decades to implement. ACDA's arms control bureaucracy should be reorganized to eliminate functions that can be performed better by other government departments and to streamline those functions, such as treaty compliance and nonproliferation, that will be the focus of arms control efforts in the future.

Abolishing ACDA is not a new idea. The State Department's own Inspector General concluded in December 1992 that ACDA "has lost ground to other agencies in recent years and its use as an instrument of government has declined." Among the hundreds of experts interviewed, the Inspector General admitted, there was "no consensus" as to what role ACDA should play "or even whether there is a role for a separate arms control agency." The report concluded by recommending the revitalization and "restructuring" of ACDA toward "high technical" issues, such as dismantling the former Soviet nuclear arsenal.

More recently, senior officials at the State Department proposed merging ACDA into the department. The merger also would include the Agency for International Development (AID) and the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), as part of Vice President Gore's "Reinventing Government" initiative. On February 3, however, it was announced that Gore had rejected the State Department proposal. Given the flawed mandate under which ACDA is operating with the end of the Cold War, Congress should reconsider Gore's decision, but with an important change.

**Reinventing the Arms Control Bureaucracy.** The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency was established in 1961 during the darkest days of the superpower confrontation, when John Kennedy won his office in part to a perceived "missile gap" in favor of the Soviet Union. ACDA has embodied the notion that reductions in weapons *per se* are an important step toward global peace and stability. But arms control is merely one of several means for protecting national security, and it is wrong to direct an agency to fulfill an advocacy role for arms control as the preferred solution to national security problems.

By contrast, the Reagan Administration emphasized military strength and strategic defenses over arms control as the best means of countering the Soviet threat. This shift in emphasis worked, for it was Ronald Reagan—a long-time skeptic of arms control—whose robust defense policies brought the Soviet Union back to the negotiating table after the failure of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970s. The Reagan and Bush Administrations negotiated significant arms control treaties, including the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaties (START) I and II, and the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

The negotiations to conclude these agreements were marathon affairs, at times exhausting more than a decade of talks. But with the demise of the Soviet Union, and the array of treaties negotiated by Reagan and Bush, there is not enough left to negotiate that requires a separate, independent agency with an annual budget of \$61.2 million.

*Note:* Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

**RUSH!**

**A New Focus for Arms Control.** Congress should pick up where Gore left off and reconsider the State Department's proposal to abolish ACDA. But rather than create a "super" State Department, Congress should streamline the government's arms control efforts, folding them into the State Department, the Energy Department, and the Pentagon. Rather than the high-visibility, endless negotiations that became a fixture of the Cold War, the new generation of arms control must focus on implementing existing treaties. These include reductions in both nuclear and conventional forces and the adherence to and verification of these agreements with the successor states of the Soviet Union. A second area of new focus will be to halt the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction around the globe.

Abolishing ACDA, though, does not mean eliminating its functions, most of which should be folded into other departments. For example:

- ☛ **To the Department of State** should go responsibility for all international negotiations, such as representation to the United Nations and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (\$18.2 million cost to ACDA);
- ☛ **To the Department of Defense** should go responsibility for implementing existing treaties and dismantling nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union (\$3.5 million cost to ACDA);
- ☛ **To the Department of Energy** should go testing of nuclear weapons and technical issues associated with implementing such international nuclear agreements as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

**A New Look at Old Problems.** Congress also should establish two new standing advisory panels to ensure that arms reductions are properly verified and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As independent panels modeled, for example, on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, these bodies would be free of the institutional biases and pressures that often face executive branch agencies. They are:

**A Bipartisan Commission on Verification and Compliance.** This would be a five-member panel, chaired by an appointee of the President, with panel members chosen by the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, the Speaker of the House, and the Minority Leader of the House. The panel could be staffed by a small number of experts from ACDA's Intelligence, Verification and Information (IVI) Bureau and would advise the Senate on the verifiability of treaties. It also would issue an annual report to Congress on arms control compliance. Its activities could be budgeted at a small percentage of the \$9.6 million estimated for the present IVI Bureau.

**A Bipartisan Commission on Nonproliferation.** Similar in structure, this panel could be staffed by ACDA experts on nonproliferation issues and would be able to review export licenses for items of military value, negotiate reviews of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, develop regional arms control initiatives to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and provide an annual assessment to the Congress on nonproliferation issues.



The abolition of ACDA would streamline the national security functions of the U.S. government. It also would be an appropriate response to the call of the American people, heard in the November 1994 election, for smaller, less wasteful government. The expertise developed in ACDA could be put to better use if ACDA were eliminated. Now that the Cold War is over, there is no longer a need for a separate agency championing arms control.

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