

# ISSA Proceedings 2010 - Reasonableness And Strategic Maneuvering In Cold-War Editorial Argumentation



Over the last 150 years the New York Times, quite arguably the most influential newspaper in the world, has invoked the concept of reasonableness 746, 762 times (not counting adverbial uses, such as reasonably) to describe people and the decisions they make, the objects they construct, the processes they design, and, of course, the arguments they make and have. Turning to the editorial page, the official record of the Times' judgments on the meaning of important political events and their attempts to persuade policymakers how to respond to them, we find 22, 314 invocations of reasonableness. The editorial page's use of reasonableness matters because of its influence on elite decision-making, its significant inter-media agenda setting function, and because it explicitly purports to represent and cultivate a public voice. The Times' editorial page is one of the few self-avowed organs of what John Rawls calls public reason. John B. Oakes, the page's editor from 1956-1977, went as far as defining the "editorial we", the voice of the editorial page and by extension its readers, as nothing short of the "community of the reasonable and responsible." Where Rawls (1996) points to the U.S. Supreme Court as the exemplar of public reason, we point to the Times editorial page. The Times editorial page too gives public reason "vividness and vitality in the public forum," though much more frequently and directly (237). This does not imply the page's attempts to embody public reason are without controversy, far from it. The editorial page is a rhetorical battleground where what counts as public reason, and thus what counts as reasonable, is defined and debated. It speaks as advocate and advisor, interlocutor and instructor.

These 22, 314 invocations of reasonableness are not random. An analysis of the invocations of reasonableness on the *New York Times* editorial page from 1860 - 2004 reveals that reasonableness has several distinct meanings, modifies a large, but stable, class of referents, and works through a set of image schemata that

demonstrate how reason is profoundly conditioned by our bodily experience. The meanings of reasonableness, we found, are flexible but finite. As used in the editorial page the term has four primary meanings: the capacity to and the results of judging in a contextually sensitive, prudent, manner (6% of total uses), the capacity to and results of using sound reasoning and credible evidence to support assertions (24%), the capacity to and the results of making impartial assessments and distributing social goods equitably (24%) and, the capacity to and results of proposing and abiding by fair terms of social cooperation (46%). In relation to meaning, our analysis revealed three important dimensions: First, reasonableness refers to both the capacities of reason and the results of reasoning. Second, the meanings of reasonableness do not change over time as much as the frequencies of particular invocations of the term fluctuate in response to the times. Third, and most importantly, we found that in most of the extended socio-political controversies the editorial page commented on there was more than one of these meanings in play. That is, at the heart of the controversy was a dispute over which of these meanings should prevail. The critical question, then, is not what the meaning of reasonableness is, but, how and why arguers, both at the Times and represented in its pages, come to advocate for one of these particular meanings over another and what are the consequences of that choice. The answers to this question have important implications for argumentation and democratic theory. These include, first, correcting for the omission of the political dimensions of equity and social cooperation in the accounts of reasonableness informing argumentation theory and, secondly, introducing an important critical component to the ideal of public reason (Hicks 2002, 2003, 2007; Hicks, Margesson, & Warrenburg 2006; Hicks and Dunn 2010).

In the present essay we turn our attention to the temporal dimension of the project, focusing on those periods when the invocation of reasonableness significantly peaked and asking how the interpretation of reasonableness responded to and shaped the political events and pressures of those periods. There are two historical periods when the Times' invocations of the concept have peaked. The first is between 1890 and 1919. Over 50% of the uses of reasonableness in the entire population of editorials occurred in this epoch, commonly known as the progressive era. During this period the U.S. underwent a profound transformation, not only in the physical landscape of the country but, more importantly, through the invention of a distinctively modern, liberal governmentality that had to address the effects of rapid industrialization, the

birth of modern transportation, the demands of organized labor, and the spread of U.S. hegemony and imperialism.

The second peak, and our focus here, occurred in the late 1950's. The majority of these editorials address the Cold War, often focusing on the tactics of brinkmanship and the accompanying threats of nuclear war. These Cold War editorials are of particular interest because they depart from other editorials in their depiction of reasonableness. Specifically, they consistently focus on reasonableness as a strategic projection, an image to be crafted, and as a game to be played, albeit with the most serious of consequences. This is not to say that this is the first and only time that a strategic depiction of reasonableness found voice in the Times. But Cold War editorials do so more consistently and with a different emphasis. Rather than using the term to assess some person, argument, demand or amount as reasonable, these editorials portray reasonableness simultaneously as an ethical standard to evaluate the convictions and actions of interlocutors and as a strategic prop to be used by actors in political theater. A close reading of these editorials demonstrates how the meaning of reasonableness itself became the object of strategic maneuvering in the Cold War: The Times and the political actors portrayed in these editorials shifted between strategic and ethical accounts of reasonableness to suit their particular interests, exploiting the duality of reasonableness as capacity and standard to privilege their own views and to condemn the conduct of their interlocutors.

In what follows we show how the higher-order conditions of argumentation, namely the ethical and political commitments underwriting a critical ideal of reasonableness, served as the locus of strategic maneuvering in the editorial argumentation of the New York Times concerning Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the U.S. in September 1959 and the proposal for the complete disarmament of nuclear weapons he offered during that visit.

Khrushchev was a gifted rhetorician whose strategic maneuvering consistently challenged the Eisenhower administration. Khrushchev used each of the three methods common to strategic maneuvering: shifting the focal point of disagreement to his advantage, building popular support by provoking his audience's fears and appealing to their desires, and presenting his claims in a visceral language and in a voice that could shift registers effortlessly. By 1959 he had mastered the rhetoric of reasonableness, using its moderate tone, its conciliatory stance, and its collaborative ethos, to back the Eisenhower

administration into a series of argumentative dilemmas that threatened to reveal its military vulnerabilities, to cause its allies to doubt its commitments, and to expose its foreign policy as incoherent. To effectively counter Khrushchev meant winning the fight over what it meant to be reasonable. This contest occurred in the pages of the Times.

### *1. Sweet Reasonableness: Strategic Maneuvering and Second-Order Conditions*

From 1955 to 1960 Nikita Khrushchev campaigned to transform the menacing image of the Soviet Union cultivated during Stalin's brutal rule. The goal of the Soviet's new public relations push, launched at the 1955 Geneva conference, was "to destroy the West's stereotype of Soviet leaders as unreasonable, uncompromising monsters who speak only in insults and with whom there is no point in negotiating, since the end of capitalism is their life's ambition" (Geneva: Russian Tactics Analyzed 1955, p.E5). To counter these stereotypes, Khrushchev used Geneva as an opportunity for strategic maneuvering through the exploitation of presentational choice, refashioning the Soviet's foreign affairs rhetoric and the negotiation tactics of its delegates. Absent from the 1955 Geneva conference "were the old ferocious Soviet speeches replete with phrases like 'imperialist warmongers' and 'capitalist cannibals.' Gone too were the isolation and secretiveness of the Soviet delegates" (Geneva: Russian Tactics Analyzed 1955, p. E5). Instead the Soviets adopted a deliberately moderate tone in their statements and their delegates eagerly pursued the spotlight. "This whole complex of conduct," the Times argued, "seemed to be a means of saying we are reasonable men. We are making concessions. If you will make concessions too, we can reach agreement" (Geneva: Russian Tactics Analyzed 1955, p. E5).

Khrushchev's rhetorical campaign continued through the reconvening of the Geneva conference on May 11, 1959. The forty-one days of talk at Geneva failed to produce any binding resolutions other than an agreement to continue meeting. Khrushchev used the impasse as an occasion to call upon what Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) term the locus of the irreparable, proclaiming that the conferences' failure created an urgent need for continued talks, but now with him and Eisenhower present. Eisenhower believed that renewed talks were premature, insisting he would not go to the summit unless there was "reasonable hope for agreement there," which he regarded as a remote prospect at best (Geneva Again 1959, p. E1). The second round of talks, carried without Eisenhower or Khrushchev present, backfired, escalating the conflict between the

two countries over the U.S. military presence in Berlin. Khrushchev, through a series of interviews with former New York Governor Averell Harriman issued an ultimatum to President Eisenhower. Khrushchev was quoted as saying that unless Eisenhower agreed to a settlement in Berlin he would “act unilaterally and terminate our rights himself.” Harriman also quoted Khrushchev as saying that: “Your generals talk of maintaining your position in Berlin with force. This is a bluff. If you send in tanks they will burn and make no mistake about it. If you want war you can have it, but remember it will be your war. Our rockets will fire automatically. In the event of fighting your troops would be swallowed up in a single gulp” (Geneva Again 1959, p.E1). Soviet First Deputy Premier Frol Kozlov echoed this hard line and issued an 18-month deadline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces. Eisenhower immediately denounced Khrushchev’s ultimatum as irresponsible, citing it as evidence that despite his public appearance Khrushchev was unreasonable. Eisenhower also quickly reassured Germany that the U.S. military commitment was an “an immovable stone” (Geneva Again 1959, p.E1).

In what turned out to be a brilliant rhetorical maneuver, Khrushchev directed Soviet Foreign Prime Minister Andrei Gromyko to issue a statement that his conversation with Governor Harriman had been misinterpreted; he had made no threat nor should the 18-month deadline be understood as a precursor to force. Khrushchev then argued that this misunderstanding, and its potentially grave consequences, made a face-to-face meeting between him and Eisenhower imperative. Khrushchev suggested that only a visit by each leader to the other’s country, along with a summit meeting between them, could correct this misunderstanding. In essence, Khrushchev claimed that the Cold War was motivated by a profound lack of understanding that could only be remedied by increased contact. This appeal was effective, especially among the British who joined him in a call for a summit. While Eisenhower stood firm in his insistence that any meeting between himself and Khrushchev be preceded by discernable progress on the Berlin issue, he was undermined by the State Department, who, heavily influenced by British pressure, issued an invitation to Khrushchev for a ten-day tour of the United States that would culminate in a summit to be held at Camp David (The Great Ike-Nikita Mystery 1993, p.28).

The news of Khrushchev’s impending visit ignited a firestorm of editorial argumentation in the Times; the most potent being written by Henry Kissinger. Kissinger (1959) argued that U.S. foreign policy’s overreliance on nuclear

deterrence forced every decision to be weighed in terms of the risk of total annihilation, making us more likely to waver in our convictions. This vacillation would be exploited by Khrushchev, whose strategy, Kissinger argued, was to communicate with each of the Western powers independently, accentuating their disunity to negotiate a series of concessions from each that would further empower the Soviet Union. The New York Times echoed Kissinger's fears. The Times forwarded concerns - attributed to unnamed high-level U.S. diplomats - that Khrushchev would use the summit to back Eisenhower into a rhetorical corner. Summits, by their very nature, demand that the parties either reach a fruitful resolution or end in failure. There is a tremendous pressure on the heads of government to make concessions, even if they are imprudent, to avoid being culpable for a summit's failure. Exploiting this pressure, the Times argued, was precisely Khrushchev's strategy. By continually proclaiming the Soviets' desire to reach a reasonable agreement - while simultaneously making no real concessions and issuing demands that U.S. would never satisfy - Khrushchev could appear as "reasonableness itself," claiming that despite his best efforts, the U.S. refused to negotiate in good faith. The U.S. would appear as the unreasonable aggressor determined to fan the flames of war.

The predictions that Khrushchev would continue to cast his intentions within the rhetoric of reasonableness were correct. On the eve of his talks with Eisenhower, Khrushchev made a "fervent appeal for a reasonable approach" at Camp David. "May God give us the strength," he said to a large and supportive audience at the University of Pittsburgh, "to solve matters by reason and not force. That is what the people are expecting from us" (Khrushchev Open Talks with Eisenhower Today, 1959, p.1). The intelligence, wit and affability Khrushchev displayed in his press conferences and encounters with American citizens embodied reasonableness, dispelling the caricatures of him as a "communist devil" painted by anti-communist ideologues (Windt, 1971). The fears that Khrushchev would use reasonableness as a means for cornering Eisenhower on Berlin, were, however, misplaced. Rather than trying to force a specific agreement on Berlin, Khrushchev "readily dropped his ultimatum after only two days of talks" (Windt, 1971, p. 15). Instead he upped the ante, proposing complete disarmament. We will discuss this proposal and the strategic maneuvering it engendered in the next section. But first let's attend to the forms of strategic maneuvering his "fervent appeal" for reasonableness motivated.

Eisenhower faced a delicate argumentative task at Camp David. If the U.S. negotiated specific settlements it could send the European alliance the message that major decisions were being made without their consent. Not only could this appearance of indifference further strain relations within the alliance, it could also signal that the United States' commitment to extend its nuclear umbrella was wavering. Either of these interpretations could, as Kissinger warned, be exploited to the Soviets' advantage. If, on the other hand, the U.S. refused to offer or entertain specific proposals, trading only in generalities, the moral ground would be ceded to the Soviets. The inability to make or meet specific demands, particularly in the context of Khrushchev's show of reasonableness, would surely confuse the American citizenry, perhaps shaking their convictions in the moral superiority of the United States. More damaging yet would be the inevitable attributions of unreasonableness. By appearing to be unwilling to propose or defend a standpoint, the responsibility for breaking the summit would fall squarely on Eisenhower's shoulders. Khrushchev had made it clear that he would not hesitate in blaming Eisenhower for the continuation of the Cold War. And once successfully framed as unreasonable aggressors the U.S. could find it virtually impossible to defend its growing investments in Latin America and Southeast Asia as legitimate attempts to curb communist expansion.

Given the disastrous consequences of appearing as belligerent and unreasonable, the Eisenhower administration had to maneuver out of Khrushchev's argumentative trap. We can discern the outlines of their rhetorical strategy by analyzing the arguments made by administration officials in the New York Times, which were often echoed on the editorial page. This strategy proceeded in three steps: representing Khrushchev's reasonableness as just a political performance, contrasting this image of reasonableness with the true ideological conviction motivating Soviet political behavior, and, finally, to claim that the discrepancy between Khrushchev's projection of reasonableness and his real convictions made it clear that the summit should be treated as nothing more than a public relations front in the Cold War.

First, reasonableness was consistently described as a strategic rhetorical performance and often marked as an affectation. For instance, in the July 19<sup>th</sup> article "Drift to the Summit Marked by Confusion," the Times echoes the sentiment of anti-communists who were convinced that Khrushchev would put "up a tremendous show of peaceableness, reasonableness, and respectability at the

summit as a smokescreen for the eventual ejection of the West from Berlin” (Schmidt, 1959, p.E3). The use of performative terms like show, image, display, appearance, and illusion to modify reasonableness is prevalent throughout the Times editorial argumentation. Reasonableness is also described in affective terms, such as tone, attitude, and emotional expression. Take for example the editorial “Mikoyan Talks with Nixon,” where the Soviet minister’s reasonableness is “reflected” in “his smile and attitude.” That article invokes the most common way of casting reasonableness in affective terms: “sweet reasonableness.” Matthew Arnold popularized this phrase in his exegesis of Paul’s petition in Second Corinthians: “I beseech you by the mildness and gentleness of Christ.” The Greek word, which the King James Bible translates as gentleness, *epiekeia*, means more properly, Arnold argued, reasonableness with sweetness, or sweet reasonableness (Arnold 2010, p.207). One who is sweetly reasonable has a disposition defined by generosity, goodwill, magnanimity, and clemency towards the faults of others, a disposition at odds with popular representations of the Soviets, in general, and extended to Khrushchev, in particular. The Times indictment of Khrushchev’s appeals to reasonableness worked through a simple dissociative strategy: Khrushchev’s performance of “sweet reasonableness” was an illusion; his real motivation was to increase Soviet power.

Second, Khrushchev was portrayed as an ideologue, who despite his proclamations of reasonableness remained convinced of Communism’s superiority. Take, for instance, Salvador de Madariaga’s, the former ambassador of Spain to the U.S., influential essay in the Times magazine which claimed that “On Mr. Khrushchev’s own showing, indeed on his own words, his position is incompatible with that of every reasonable man in the West. The Soviet Union is out to bury capitalism, i.e. liberal democracy. We are therefore in the presence of an irreconcilable struggle of sovereign wills” (de Madariaga 1959, p.SM17). Even a relative moderate like Harrison Salisbury, a Times correspondent who respected Khrushchev and was deeply familiar with Soviet life, suggested that the meetings would most likely be unproductive because Khrushchev was “proceeding on the firm assumption that the Soviet economic and social system will prove itself more productive than that of the United States. He is a convinced, if somewhat unorthodox Marxist” (Khrushchev’s Russia - 8, 1959, p.E1). The presupposition common to de Madariaga’s and Salisbury’s arguments, despite their political differences, was that reasonableness is threatened by unwavering conviction. Reasonableness, on this view, demands ideological flexibility, a mind



that is not so committed to its own account of the truth that it fails to see the truth in the other's standpoint. Conviction of the wrong kind, either too intense or too sequestered, is the mark of an unreasonable person. Khrushchev, it was routinely argued in the Times and elsewhere, was unreasonable because of the intensity of his conviction, displayed in his speeches and his service as one of Stalin's lieutenants. The conceit of these arguments is that liberalism, always defined as concomitant with capitalism, is inherently reasonable because it allows for deliberation and choice, while communism subsists on dogmatic zeal.

Third, once Khrushchev was rendered unreasonable, all that was necessary was to remind the reader that to the communist negotiation was a weapon. Armed with the knowledge that the summit was a battle in the ongoing propaganda war, rather than a genuine negotiation, the goals of the summit could be redefined in purely strategic terms. Strategically maneuvering through defining the type of argumentative activity being used, and, therefore, the normative standards of assessment proper to that type, the Times routinely quoted Eisenhower and his administration trying to lower expectations of the summit, downgrading the possibility of successfully negotiating any binding agreements and suggesting that the most that could be hoped for was the relaxation of tension and perhaps laying the groundwork for future meetings (Geneva Again 1959 p.E1).

This three-prong strategy was designed to demonstrate that the second-order conditions of argumentation were absent, thereby making the negotiations illegitimate. Second-order conditions refer to an advocates cognitive and psychological ability to engage in critical discussion, or genuine negotiations, aiming for rational resolution and, more importantly, are committed to embodying a "reasonable discussion attitude" when encountering their interlocutors (van Eemeren, Houtlosser, & Snoeck Henkemans 2008, p.478). If Khrushchev's ideological convictions were so intense as to blind him to the obvious economic and political superiority of liberal-capitalism, then his blindness was more the product of constant exposure to Soviet propaganda than any inherent personal defect. Such a characterization was a rhetorical move that squared his obvious intelligence with his presumed dogmatism, rendering him incapable of engaging in genuine argumentation. Because these second-order conditions of argumentation were lacking, the burdens of reciprocity and good will associated with reasonableness were lifted. This left the U.S. free to enter the summit in "bad faith," just as it accused the Soviets of doing, treating the summit as an

exercise in propaganda and using the talks as an opportunity to discover weakness in their interlocutor's position that could be exploited at a future date.

The goal of the Eisenhower administration's strategic maneuvering was to circumvent the argumentative dilemma contained in Khrushchev's calls for reasonableness: How can advocates project reasonableness without signaling retreat, or even the willingness to retreat, from any of their prior commitments? The administration's strategy utilized the press as a platform to argue that their interlocutor's calls were a mirage, and therefore, the subsequent negotiations were an illusion, albeit an illusion absolutely necessary for maintaining peace.

## *2. Disarmament and Distrust: Strategic Maneuvering and Third-Order Conditions.*

On September 18, 1959, the second day of Khrushchev's visit, he augmented his calls for reasonableness with a bold proposal for complete nuclear disarmament. Now Eisenhower had an even more vexing question of how to respond to this grand proposal without appearing to be unreasonable, or justifying Khrushchev's claims that the U.S. was the unreasonable aggressor sustaining the Cold War. This would require more strategic maneuvering.

Khrushchev caught the Eisenhower administration completely off guard. In a speech given to a large, supportive audience at the University of Pittsburgh, Khrushchev "called for 'general and complete' disarmament in four years" (Soft & Hard 1960, p.E1). The speech envisioned a nuclear free world where the U.S. and the Soviet Union lived as "good neighbors." Khrushchev told the crowd about his "dream" of a "day when all of the arms would be sent to the open hearth furnaces to be melted down for peaceful uses, when the atom was only used for peace and when the sword is beaten into ploughshares" (Salisbury 1959, p.14). This was a deft strategic maneuver. Not only did Khrushchev use this proposal to maneuver topically, revising the anticipated disagreement space constituting the upcoming Camp David summit - the U.S. military presence in Berlin and its implications for German reunification - he reconstituted the audience and their demands, radically increasing the moral constituency that the Eisenhower administration had to address. By making his appeal directly to the American citizenry, rather than to diplomatic officials behind closed doors, Khrushchev sought to create the appearance of an ethical gap between the public and the administration. Khrushchev drove a wedge between the populace and the government, ratcheting up domestic pressure on the Eisenhower administration in the run up to a

contentious US election. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, in a speech given at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York, Khrushchev remarked that he was overwhelmed by the American people's desire for peace, a desire at odds with how they were represented by their government. The U.S. people, he claimed, were both friendly and peaceful, whereas the U.S. "government still had to prove" that it truly desired peace (Salisbury 1959, p.14). This bifurcation between the desires of the people and of the State was a prominent theme in the speeches he gave during his trip. With each call for disarmament, Khrushchev sought to distance the people from their President, suggesting that Eisenhower was misappropriating his popular support, attempting to brandish it as weapon in the coming talks and turn the talks into a "bull contest." Eisenhower risked turning the Camp David talks, Khrushchev warned, into a contest to see "who was more stubborn, who had the stronger legs and the longer horns and would shift the other from his position" (Salisbury 1959, p.14). In essence, Khrushchev argued that the American people were reasonable, but their leader was not.

This tactic incensed the Eisenhower administration. They were backed into another argumentative dilemma. How could they reject an offer of complete disarmament and still appear to the world as reasonable? How could they appear to entertain Khrushchev's proposal without appearing to waver in their commitments to extend the nuclear umbrella to their NATO allies? Again their response was to focus on the meaning of reasonableness itself. And again it was the editorial page of the Times that provided the platform for doing so.

Khrushchev's proposal was immediately portrayed as disingenuous. A "thinly disguised piece of demagogic propaganda," was how it was described by Salvador de Madariaga, (de Madariaga 1959, p.SM17). Times correspondent Harry Schwartz declared that Khrushchev was attempting to sell himself as "the apostle of peace and disarmament to the masses" (Schwartz 1960, p.E3). The editorial page claimed that "the spectacular but fraudulent Soviet disarmament plans are essentially propaganda devices to exploit mankind's hopes and fears and they cannot be met by pleas of reasoning, but only by equally dramatized but honest proposals that will persuade the world"(Reply to Khrushchev 1960, p.24).

The public relations battle, the Times editorial page contended, needed to be fought through redefining what it means to be reasonable. This, rather than mere platitudes of good will, the Times argued, entails "an assumption of reciprocal

reasonableness or sincerity” (Reply to Khrushchev 1960, p.24). Circumventing the dilemma posed by Khrushchev’s proposal required more than a smear campaign. It was necessary to forward a counterproposal that would conclusively demonstrate the “revolutionary mind’s” inability to reciprocate and prove that Khrushchev was insincere. The Western counterproposal differed from the Soviet’s plan by offering “phased and safeguarded agreements” (The News of the Week in Review 1960, p.E1). The counterproposal involved a system of strict controls and verification protocols, a series of safeguards the Times and the Eisenhower administration were confident that the Russians would fail to “even consider” (Soft and Hard 1960, p.E1). The U.S. proposal held that “in the first stage, nations would notify the IDO of proposed space launchings. In the second stage, the use of space vehicles for nuclear weapons would be banned, the production of fissionable materials for weapons would halt and nuclear stockpiles would be reduced. In the third stage, nuclear weapons and military missiles would be eliminated” (The News of the Week in Review 1960, p.E1). At each stage each country would have the right to use inspections to verify that the other had complied with the terms of the agreement. In contrast, the “Soviet plan postpones any action on nuclear disarmament until the third stage when, within one year, all nuclear weapons and missiles would be abolished” (The News of the Week in Review, 1960 p.E1) and lacked verification provisions. The discrepancy between the two proposals, in particular the Soviet’s plan to delay the destruction of their weaponry until the U.S. had decreased its military presence in Europe, made it clear that Khrushchev had no real intention to follow through on his proposal. In short, the counterproposal exposed Khrushchev’s intention of using the proposal as a strategic maneuver to push the U.S. out of Berlin before reneging on his promise to disarm.

The effectiveness of this strategy depended on the Times redefinition of reasonableness as reciprocity and sincerity, both components of the social cooperation meaning. If Khrushchev rejected the counterproposal, refusing a series of inspections to verify that the terms of the agreement were satisfied, the U.S had legitimate grounds to treat his proposal as mere propaganda. This characterization worked in tandem with the strategy of claiming that Khrushchev’s calls for reasonableness were an illusion and insufficient to satisfy the second-order conditions of argumentation. But the counterproposal went further, demonstrating that the third-order conditions of argument were missing. Third-order conditions refer to the “external conditions” that “need to be fulfilled

to conduct a critical discussion properly.” They “pertain . . . to the power or authority relations between the participants” and how those relations of power define the discussion situation (van Eemeren, Houtlosser, & Snoeck Henkemans 2008, p.478). These conditions include the presence of a social and political environment conducive to critical discussion to manage differences of opinion and the use of genuine negotiation to allocate risk and responsibility. There are minimum political thresholds of freedom, autonomy, and equality necessary to rely on critical discussion as a mode of conflict resolution. There are also affective thresholds, such as trust, confidence, and openness that must also be met to ensure critical argumentation proceeds properly. Neither the political nor the affective thresholds could be met because the two nations did not trust each other enough to generate and secure the requisite commitments underwriting a proposal to abolish nuclear weapons. Moreover, the Soviets were unwilling to abide by the terms needed to construct an environment of global governance capable of enforcing those commitments. Without such a system of global governance, any proposal that did not provide the means of generating and securing “reciprocal reasonableness,” could be tagged as utopian, fraudulent, or both. In short, the way out of the dilemma Khrushchev’s offer presented was to show that the socio-political environment was too fragile, or too hostile, to ensure that it would be carried out. Hence, for the Times, the Eisenhower administration’s refusal to take the proposal seriously was seen as reasonable and its refusal to entertain the idea of a world without nuclear weapons was taken as prudent.

### *3. Conclusion*

The rhetorical battle between Eisenhower and Khrushchev played out in the Times has the potential to extend our understanding of the relationship between strategic maneuvering and reasonableness. Khrushchev’s strategic maneuvering embodied the three primary tactics identified by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2001): exploiting topic potential to frame the issue in contention to one’s advantage, adapting one’s argument to the fears and desires of the audience, and enhancing the presentational force of one’s argument. The U.S. response, however, did not stay within these three parameters. Instead, the editorial argumentation in the Times consisted of a complex set of strategic maneuvers that revolved around claims that the higher order conditions of argumentation were absent.

The first of these maneuvers argued that Khrushchev's calls for reasonableness were a performance that was belied by the intensity of his ideological convictions and, therefore, should be taken as an elaborate ruse. This move was designed to show that the second-order condition of argumentation, the ethical disposition needed for critical reasonableness, was absent. Ironically, the Times did not argue that what was necessary was a genuine show of reasonableness, or that the U.S. embodied the ethical dispositions required for it. What the Times left ambiguous was whether or not reasonableness within the context of international relations could be anything other than a performance, whether or not reasonableness itself could serve as a genuine ethical standard for assessing the actions of the two superpowers.

The second strategic maneuver claimed Khrushchev's grand proposal for disarmament could be exposed as unreasonable, if a strategic counterproposal could show that, when pressed, Khrushchev would refuse the ethical obligation of reciprocity. This move was designed to show that the third-order conditions of argumentation, the social and political environment of mutual interdependence and trust argumentation demands, were absent. The irony is the U.S. had no expectation that its counterproposal would be taken seriously, and the Times made it clear that the Eisenhower administration would not want it to be accepted, as they too would refuse to live with the verification protocols the counterproposal set out.

Should these ironies lead us to conclude that these strategic maneuvers were derailments of critical discussion or did they expose the real limitations of Khrushchev's claims, and therefore, work as effective tactics in the confrontation stage of the negotiations? The answer lies in whether or not Khrushchev's calls for reasonableness—for the negotiations to be modeled on fair terms of social cooperation and the goodwill necessary to enact them—are taken as sincere or insincere. The Times clearly judged Khrushchev's call for reasonableness and the disarmament proposal it engendered as insincere. But on what grounds besides the portrayal of Khrushchev and his colleagues as unreasonable—an unreasonableness that was not the product of any particular action or personal trait but an allegiance to a rival ideology?

While we can't say that the Times' assumption was mistaken, that Khrushchev was indeed sincere. We can say that the Times Cold War editorials clearly express an ideology that saw argumentation, at least in international relations, as nothing

more or less than a weapon in an ongoing propaganda war. The Times shared George Keenan's view that Soviet power is "impervious to logic of reason, and it is highly sensitive to the logic of force" (1947, §5, ¶1). This view effectively renders critical discussion moot; Khrushchev's arguments and proposals were prejudged as empty rhetoric in the service of power. But what if Khrushchev's call for reasonableness and his proposal for disarmament was not simply a ploy to expose U.S. military vulnerabilities, but an attempt to create an opening for genuine negotiation? Of course, he would have had to maneuver carefully to ensure that he did not tip his hand and set off alarms within the hard-liners in his own government. He would have to strategically use the U.S. press to pressure Eisenhower to meet with him personally and in private. And he would have to hope in that meeting both he and Eisenhower would have the opportunity to correct their misunderstandings and to build trust, restoring the higher-order conditions of argument essential to forging a lasting peace. Of course, this is our conjecture. But it may not be ours alone. Secretary of State Christian Herter invited Khrushchev to Camp David in spite of Eisenhower's clearly stated opposition. Herter knew Eisenhower would be furious, but was persuaded by British intelligence reports that Khrushchev sincerely wanted to pursue disarmament, despite the forces in his own government that refused to even consider it (The Great Ike-Nikita Mystery 1993, p. 28). For those laboring under the ideological assumption animating the Times Cold War editorials, however, this possibility was simply inconceivable; an assumption that is, itself, clearly unreasonable.

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