

## FOREWARD

Henry Sokolski

I first contacted Victor Gilinsky in the late 1970s when I was working on my master's thesis and he was a founding member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I had a question on the Atoms for Peace Program and when I wrote him, I didn't expect an answer. To my astonishment, though, he replied. That was 45 years ago. Now, Victor advises my nonprofit. We coauthor nearly everything and talk every other day by phone.

Keeping up with him is challenging. He has an endless inventory of edifying and amusing stories that involve historical figures as well as his neighbors, acquaintances, and boyhood buddies. He is a copious reader of articles, studies, reports, and books. He listens to right-wing radio commentators, as well as *Democracy Now!*, and Russian-sponsored RTV. He lifts weights, practices yoga, and is an ardent tango dancer. He once took motorcycle lessons. Thankfully, he dropped that.

For me, however, his greatest gift is his ability to cut to the nut of almost any debate. Over the years, he has taught me to be attentive to those at odds with what I am most comfortable with. He also has boosted my morale with sound advice. "Unless someone is going to drive you around in a big black car and shower you with money," he once counseled, "it's best to stick to your flight plan." That advice is what he, more often than not, takes himself.

Certainly, in these pages, you can see the signature of someone who is not just mostly right or bright, but free, i.e., someone who remains consistent until persuaded by a truly stronger argument to change their mind. This puts Victor in the very best of company. Those who actually know him are drawn to him. Yet, he runs no popularity contest and is relatively quiet ... unless provoked.

I remember traveling with him to Vienna once and us getting turned around in the airport. A guard would not let us proceed to our plane

as we had stepped an inch over what the guard insisted was the unmarked “no-return” line. She demanded that we take an extremely long route to the gate, which would have made us miss our plane, and started yelling “schnell, schnell.” My jaw ran slack; Victor’s did not. In a calm but firm tone, he instructed the attendant to “call the police.” She was not ready for that and, after several short exchanges, was forced to call her supervisor. He, in turn, assessed the situation, frowned, and brusquely walked us through the checkpoint we previously had been barred from transiting.

That scene, in a variety of small and large ways, is played out in much of what this volume contains. In it, are some of Victor’s more important pieces, ones he had a hand in selecting, organized into sections each of which is headed with one or more expert commentaries. He and I coauthored a good number of the volume’s pieces. All bear his stamp. There are many articles Victor and I chose to leave out but, as he is still at work, there’s more to come.

*November 2021*