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**A LABOUR  
BRITAIN AND  
THE WORLD**

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*ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE*

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## I. Problems in 1945

I want to talk tonight about the way in which I see the major world problems which would face a Labour Government from 1964 to 1974. So I'm going to cover quite a large span of time as well as a large area. I will start with some platitudes — politics is largely a question of choosing the right platitudes at the right time.

First the only lasting guarantee of peace is general and comprehensive disarmament. Second, you can't have general and comprehensive disarmament unless you have quite an advanced form of world government; for even if all the countries in the world were persuaded to throw into the sea all their arms, both conventional and atomic, that in itself would not remove the political disagreements by which mankind has been tormented since history began. So long as there are political disagreements, national governments are liable to seek arms in order to settle the disagreements in their favour and therefore even in a totally disarmed world unless you have some sort of supranational authority which will keep people disarmed the process of rearmament is bound to begin again.

The third platitude with which I want to start is that the only way to achieve world government is by a steady strengthening in both the scope and the authority of the United Nations. This in turn must depend on the prior achievement of two major conditions. The first is that the major powers in the world should agree on this; otherwise any strengthening in the scope and authority of the United Nations will require one group of major powers to impose its will on the other group, thereby risking the world war which it is intended to avoid. The second is that the world situation should be generally accepted as a just one. Otherwise any attempt to produce or impose a world order is bound to appear as an attempt by the people possessing power to impose their will permanently on those who do not possess power — as an attempt by the 'haves' to impose their will on the 'have-nots'.

If we look at the world since the end of the Second World War from this point of view, it is easy to understand why after the Labour Government achieved power in 1945, progress towards these general objectives was so slow. In the first case there was a fundamental disagreement between the major powers, not only about the sort of interests which major powers have always disagreed about throughout history, but also about the very concept of how to organise a world society. Those of the non-Communist powers which did recognise the need to organise a world society, saw a world society as coming about in very much the same way as a national

society has come about in the West — through the establishment of political organs which would be capable of exerting authority over all the existing countries in the world whatever their internal social system.

### **Communist Theories**

But the group of countries with Communist governments in 1945 rejected from the start this conception of how to organise world order. They believed as their doctrine had taught them, that you could only get a stable and peaceful world when their own particular social system had spread to cover the rest of the globe, that lasting peace was impossible so long as capitalism remained an important force in world affairs. They were pretty confident that Communism would spread to cover the whole globe quite soon and I don't think one can blame them. In 1905 the Russian Communists were a tiny little group in a very small party in one rather backward country in the world. By 1918 they were running a sixth of the world and, by 1949, they were running (or appeared to be running) a third of the world. It was very natural for the Soviet leaders at that time to extrapolate from the experience of their first fifty years and to imagine that within another fifty years they would be running the whole world, that they did represent "the wave of history". So they saw the establishment of world order as depending on the establishment in all countries of the sort of society which they themselves established in Russia and had extended in 1945 to the whole of Eastern Europe and which extended in 1949 to the largest country in the world, representing almost half the population of Asia—China. Moreover at that time the Russian leaders believed, as Communists, that in the course of the inevitable advance of 'Socialism' to world dominion, sooner or later the capitalist powers, in desperation, would combine in arms against them—that the Cold War would probably, indeed sometimes they even said must inevitably, end in a hot war before the victory of the international proletariat was finally complete.

So long as there was this fundamental disagreement between the Communist governments and those other governments in the world which believed in some sort of world order, there was obviously no chance of giving the United Nations, as an organisation covering different types of social system, the sort of powers which it would need to become any sort of world government.

### **Colonial Empires**

But there was also, in 1945, a second obstacle to the development of the United Nations into some form of world government—the palpable injustice of the situation in about half of the world. Most of Africa and Asia was under direct political control by a small group of European countries, and Latin America felt itself to be under indirect political and economic control from the United States of America. So long as there was this basic conflict between the imperial and the colonial peoples, there was very little chance of establishing any real stability or security in the world.

So the first Labour government to hold real power, from 1945 to 1951, was distracted from its main objective, the conversion of the United Nations into some form of world government, by two prior commitments. On the one hand, it had to build in the Western world a group of countries strong enough to deter the Communist governments from trying to expand by force or by the threat of force, and in particular to commit the United States of America to the military defence of the countries bordering on Soviet power in Europe and Asia. On the other hand, it had to transform an Empire of five hundred million subject people into a Commonwealth of equal partners. On the whole I would say its success in carrying out this second task is probably the main claim of the 1945 Labour Government to a major place in world history.

By 1951 both of these interim tasks were largely fulfilled. The United States was committed to the defence of Europe, the Middle-East and parts of Asia, and had given vital assistance to economic recovery in Western Europe, through the Marshall Plan. The Colombo Plan was beginning in Asia and the bulk of the British Empire was already independent or very far along the road to independence.

## 2. The Last Twelve Years

**T**HE problems facing the next Labour Government will be very different from those which faced the Attlee administration in 1945. I want this evening to discuss the major changes in the pattern of world politics which have developed over the twelve years since Labour was last in power, and which are likely to extend further during the ten or twelve years when I hope Labour will be in power again. The four major factors which I want to discuss are first of all the trend in the technology of warfare over the last decade and so far as we can foresee it over the next decade; unfortunately the instruments of physical power still set the framework within which diplomacy must be pursued. Secondly I want to discuss the changes which have taken place inside the Communist world. Thirdly, the changes inside the Western world and finally the changes which have taken place in Africa and Asia, in the ex-colonial world.

### **Military Technology**

Let us look first at the technology of warfare. The major development of the last twelve years has been the production of miniature atomic war-heads and of rockets which are capable of carrying them in a few minutes from any one part of the world to any other part of the world by any route round the globe. At the present time both the United States and Russia have invulnerable thermo-nuclear retaliatory forces which are accepted by both sides as an effective deterrent against all-out attacks. I do not think there can be any doubt that at the present time no one in authority in either Moscow or Washington has the slightest intention of deliberately starting an all-out attack on his adversary because he knows for certain that the consequence would be immediate retaliation at a level which would inflict damage out of all proportion to any potential gain.

There has been an enormous amount of argument both among governments and among intellectuals outside government as to whether this so-called balance of terror, which is admitted to be an effective deterrent against all-out war, is going to make more or less likely a limited war particularly with conventional forces alone. Many people have argued — I did myself, eight years ago — that the development of a thermo-nuclear stalemate at the level of all-out war might make both sides more ready to undertake a limited war, particularly with purely conventional arms against an ally of the other. But nearly all the evidence available over the last eight years points in the other direction. The plain fact is that so long as Russia and America each have the power to destroy one another's civilisation, and so long as they maintain a political and juridical commitment to come to the assistance of their allies, neither is likely, deliberately to launch a limited attack on any of his adversary's allies, for fear that a small war might escalate into a total war. The really striking thing about the last five or six years is that, contrary to the predictions of many clever people, the Russians have shown themselves far less ready

to take military risks for the sake of political gains than they were before they themselves had an invulnerable retaliatory power. They haven't shown themselves prepared to gamble on America's unreadiness to commit suicide on behalf of an ally.

Indeed, one of the things that I still find very difficult to explain, is why the only serious military risk that the Russians have taken in these past ten years should have been taken in a direct challenge on the United States of America's own frontier in Cuba, rather than in Europe or the Middle-East or Asia. In any case, it is very unlikely so long as a situation continues in which each side can inflict catastrophic and unacceptable damage on the other, that either side will present a deliberate challenge to the other by overt aggression even on a local issue against an ally with purely conventional weapons. It is, of course, essential that we should do everything necessary to ensure that this stability is not upset. One of the problems is that the fact that all-out retaliation means total destruction for the power employing it on behalf of an ally, has opened an agonising debate inside the Western Alliance and possibly also between China and the Soviet Union as to whether an ally's promises are to be trusted, and there is still deep disagreement inside the Western Alliance as to whether the strategy adopted for the defence of Europe should be calculated to minimise or maximise the risk of escalation in case of a local attack.

But whatever answer is found to the problem of closing the psychological gap between the low probability of retaliation required to deter an aggressor and the higher level required to reassure an ally, one thing is certain and is very important for Britain; and that is that the cost of new weapons systems has been rising continuously since nuclear weapons first came into existence. Their complexity has been increasing, the rate at which they become obsolete has been increasing, and the cost of replacing an obsolete weapons system has been rising at least ten times faster than our gross national product. So it is unlikely that any power with substantially smaller resources than the Soviet Union or the United States — particularly if it comes into the arms race twenty years late — is going to be a serious competitor in that race at all. Even Britain, which joined the atomic arms race within a few years of the United States and Russia, and which had for some years a very effective independent retaliatory force, has had to decide, under a Conservative government, that if it wants to keep a deterrent into the 1970's it will have to rely on a weapons system provided by the United States. In other words, the Great Power arms race now concerns only the United States and the Soviet Union.

### **The Smaller Powers**

Unfortunately, another feature of developments in the last twelve years which is likely to become even more disturbing during the next ten or twelve years is that the arms race among the smaller powers has become more intense, more expensive and more dangerous with every year that passes.

In the first place, so long as the Cold War continues, both America and the Soviet Union may see an interest in dumping their obsolete but highly

sophisticated weapons on smaller powers at give-away prices, in the hope of winning political advantage, or of making economic gains. There are examples of that at the present time in the arms race between Malaysia and Indonesia, in Somalia's decision to get modern weapons from the Soviet Union for protection against Ethiopia or for attack on Kenya.

In the second place it is possible to produce an atomic weapons system of a sort quite cheaply nowadays. Almost every first-year physics undergraduate now knows the scientific principles on which atomic weapons are based, and any society which is capable of producing a watch and a motor-car is capable of producing a mechanism for triggering off an atomic explosion.

So far as the Great Power arms race is concerned the main disincentive against going in for atomic weapons is the colossal cost of a delivery system which is capable of penetrating a Great Power's defences. But so far as the Smaller Power race is concerned, most of the small powers already possess aeroplanes which neighbouring small powers could not be sure of shooting down. So there is a very strong incentive for a small power which is frightened of a local enemy or which is determined to make a local conquest to start developing atomic weapons. It might not be very expensive for a small power to achieve a delivery system for its atomic weapons which would be perfectly adequate for destroying its local enemy although ludicrously inadequate for use against the Soviet Union or the United States. This in fact is a major concern for some Middle Eastern countries at the present time. It would only need two aircraft with rudimentary atomic weapons to destroy organised society in Israel or to destroy organised society in Egypt. Moreover modern delivery vehicles like rockets and supersonic aircraft are themselves so expensive in relation to their conventional striking power that a small country possessing them is tempted to give them an atomic punch for purely economic reasons. Thus though there is now a fair degree of stability in the military balance between the Great Powers and a very strong disincentive against small powers trying to join the Great Power arms race, unless something is done about it there may be mounting incentives for the small powers to go into a spiralling arms race of their own against one another and particularly to enter the atomic weapons field.

### **The Soviet Bloc**

Now let us look at the changes which have taken place inside the Soviet bloc. In the first place the enormously increased destruction which would be an inevitable concomitant of any war against an atomic power has probably persuaded the Soviet leaders to reject any temptation of using direct military aggression in order to expand their frontiers. Moreover the present group of Soviet leaders are confident in any case about their ability to defeat the capitalist world economically by exploiting the resources already existing inside Russia's present frontiers. Equally important is the fact that the ideological element which has made Soviet foreign policy so intractable for so many years is steadily and rapidly eroding. An essential element in the Soviet view of the world during the period of the



last Labour Government was the assumption—so deeply-rooted that it was rarely expressed—that as the Communist camp expanded to cover the world, it would remain under the central control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In my opinion the inescapable falsity of this assumption is going to bring about a radical change in the ideological foundations of Soviet foreign policy. Ever since Tito broke away from Soviet control because Stalin refused him dominion status in the Russian Empire, the Russians have been presented with proof after proof that the capture of power by Communist parties in countries outside Russia has tended to lead to a reduction in Russian control over those parties rather than to a strengthening in the power of the Soviet state. The most striking example is the growing split between the Soviet Union and China which from the ideological point of view is already total. It can go no further. What further consequences it will have for interstate relations between Russia and China remains to be seen, but there is no possibility whatever that the Chinese Communists will ever accept that subservience to the Soviet Communists which was expected to be automatic twenty years ago.

This has already had two important effects on the ideological attitude of the Soviet leaders towards the outside world. In the first place their real confidence about Communism as the wave of the future is nothing like so complete as it was at the end of the Second World War. More important still, they are beginning to see that their relations with other Communist governments are the same in nature as their relations with capitalist governments. Over a wide range of issues, in their relations with China, Albania, and to a lesser extent with Poland, Hungary, and Rumania they now face the traditional diplomatic problems with which capitalist countries have always been familiar. For the first time in their history, for example, they are facing all the problems of coalition diplomacy with which NATO is so familiar.

I believe that as this process continues, it is bound to have more and more influence on Russia's attitude towards the outside world in general. Russia is already beginning to react more and more towards the total world situation like the United States. Both the Great Powers are beginning to see that they have a major interest in freezing the present balance of military power, particularly since this would stop the arms race at a level which leaves them predominant inside their own camps. The test-ban agreement of July, 1963, has an historic importance from this point of view. It is the first occasion since 1945 when the leaders of the two camps have recognised a common interest in halting the arms race by co-operation with one another at the expense of disagreement with their allies rather than in trying to win the arms race in competition with one another and in co-operation with their allies.

### **The Western Bloc**

Now let us look at some of the changes which have taken place in the Western bloc. The most important change here of course is the enormous growth in confidence and economic strength of Western Europe. On the one hand, partly for the reasons I have already discussed, the military

threat from the Soviet Union is much smaller than it seemed ten or twelve years ago. On the other hand the economic strength of Western Europe as a whole is now substantially greater than that of the United States. For the first time since the end of the Second World War, the European countries can at least imagine the possibility of building a European political and economic bloc in the world which would be strong enough economically and could make itself strong enough militarily to be independent of America. None the less, the probability that Western Europe will in fact form any sort of political or economic bloc seems nothing like so great as it did twelve months ago, because France has made it clear that so long as de Gaulle is President, France will only join such a European bloc if she is its uncontested leader, and therefore, if Britain is outside it. Meanwhile, Western Germany has made it increasingly clear that her political support for such a bloc would depend on the bloc supporting her national aim of reunification; this aim is not shared to the same degree by any of her neighbours or partners in the Common Market.

### **The Uncommitted World**

Now, let us look at the changes in the uncommitted world. In many respects I think these are perhaps the most important of all the changes which have taken place in the last twelve years and, in some respects, the most disturbing. Imperialism has been almost totally liquidated throughout the whole of Africa and Asia, and there is no longer any Western Power which controls large populations in those continents. Those few colonies which do remain are likely to become independent with or without imperial consent, within the next few years.

But the success with which India survived the transition to independence left many of us unprepared for the extreme instability of the political situation in most of the ex-colonial countries. Most of them face economic and social problems, which are unlikely to be solved by their existing regimes. Many of them are likely to develop completely different types of regime before their basic problems even start finding a solution. The revolutionary internal changes inevitable in most of the Afro-Asian countries may often erupt across existing state frontiers which are often largely artificial. A change of regime in one country may appear as a direct threat to the regime of a neighbouring country, and may sometimes appear as a threat to its territorial integrity. We have already seen a war between Morocco and Algeria, the threat of a war between Kenya and Somalia in which Ethiopia might join, half-war between Indonesia and Malaysia, and a split in the Middle East extending beyond the old split between the Arab countries and Israel to a three-way split among the Arab countries themselves — on the one hand the monarchist regimes in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Gulf Sheikdoms and on the other hand the modern regimes split between the Nasserite Socialists and the Ba'ath Socialists, the latter split further among themselves.

I believe we are going to have to live with this instability for a long time, and the main duty for people of goodwill outside Africa and Asia

is to do everything possible to see that these internal conflicts cause as little suffering as possible to the peoples concerned and above all to reduce the international violence that attends them.

Here the question of external arms supplies acquires major importance. Few people yet realise how important it is to try to reach a situation in which the arms producing countries outside Afro-Asia agree to limit their supplies of arms to the Afro-Asian countries; if such arms supplies continue uncontrolled, not only will the inevitable local conflicts cause infinitely more misery than need be but also the formidable economic problems facing the countries will be rendered almost insoluble by the enormous additional burdens of the arms race. And, of course, the economic problem is the major challenge they must meet.

Marx used to predict that as capitalism developed, the gulf between rich and poor would grow steadily wider, indeed the poorer would grow absolutely poorer as the rich grew richer. He was wrong about the societies he was describing, only because he ignored the opportunities afforded by democracy in Western Europe, where the underprivileged were able to organise for a bigger share of the growing cake, first in Trade Unions and later in Socialist Parties. But there is no analogous democracy in the world society today. There is so far, no forum through which the underprivileged of the world can appeal to the conscience and open the pockets of the privileged. The result is that the gap between the developed white peoples on both sides of the Iron Curtain and the undeveloped, mainly coloured peoples to the South of them in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America is actually growing wider all the time. If it is allowed to grow wider indefinitely, quite apart from the appalling human misery that will entail, it will present a major threat to world peace because countries which cannot afford or cannot produce a higher standard of life for their enormous population may none-the-less be able to afford atomic weapons. The analogy of Japan in the last hundred years is a very relevant one here. The military option may seem attractive to hopelessly underprivileged people in Africa and Asia when it has ceased to have any appeal whatever to their privileged neighbours to the north, and Marx's revolutionary prediction may come true on a global scale when it was falsified in Europe.

### 3. Policy for Labour

**N**OW let us look at the implications of all this for British policy. The first point I want to make is again a platitude — though one which has been persistently ignored in recent years by many people on both sides of the House of Commons — that all the major problems we face in the next twelve years are global and not regional problems. On the one hand we must promote co-operation between the United States and the Soviet Union to halt the arms race and to stabilise the military environment of world politics. On the other hand we must start to bridge the economic gap between the rich countries in the Northern hemisphere and the poor countries to the South of them by constructing a completely new trading system within which the poor countries can earn a steadily rising standard of life.

Both these problems are global ones and our survival as a people, like the survival of all peoples, depends on solving them. If we fail to halt the arms race and to end the Cold War, the probability of hot war is so great that it won't matter whether we are in a European Union or outside it, whether we are committed or uncommitted, and what resolutions we passed at the last Labour Party Conference. The same is true of the economic problem. Unless somehow we can start to close the gap between rich and poor in the world as a whole, then any steps we take to increase our own wealth in our particular part of the world may actually increase, rather than reduce, the dangers of an ultimate explosion.

#### The Commonwealth

In this situation the Commonwealth has a unique potential value for British policy, since it bridges all the great gulfs which now divide humanity — between committed and uncommitted, between rich and poor, and between white and coloured. Precisely because it is not itself a tightly organised international bloc, each of its members has influence outside it in the other important world groupings. The fact that it is not, and could never be, the sort of superstate which some would like to make of the Common Market is a strength and not a weakness in the modern world. For the global problems are more likely to be solved if co-operation develops through an untidy proliferation of overlapping international groupings, each with a membership appropriate to its function, than if the world first crystallises into a small number of regional superstates, each asserting its identity primarily by opposition to outsiders.

I believe that a British Government which saw the world problem in the sort of way I have described could make the Commonwealth a far more effective influence for good in world affairs. Besides developing a new pattern of intra-Commonwealth trade as an example of the way to improve commercial relations between rich and poor countries, Britain could extend political consultation inside the Commonwealth so as to make it an essential part of the nervous system of a new world order.

### The Common Market

The tragedy of the Conservative Government's decision to apply for membership of the Common Market two years ago is that it was taken at the wrong time and for the wrong reason. Regional co-operation is useful only in so far as it helps rather than hinders a solution of the two major global problems; the Cold War and the growing economic gap between East and West. At the time we applied to join the Common Market, the dominant political influences inside it were hostile to a solution of these problems. To personalise it perhaps a little unfairly, the dominant political influence inside the Common Market was the alliance between Adenauer and de Gaulle.

It was obvious from the word 'go' that the people who held the majority of influence at the time were not going to allow us to join on terms which might rob them of their majority. It always seemed to me that there was an element of political naivety in the assumption that we could succeed in negotiations whose whole purpose was to rob the controlling majority in the Common Market of their power and to revise their policies.

Of course to some extent the Conservatives' motives were different in any case. On the economic side I think they had come to despair of solving Britain's problem by any conscious act of government in Westminster and hoped that the problem would be solved for them by the operation of blind international market forces. On the political side their choice of Europe as against the Commonwealth reflected a revulsion against what they saw as the ingratitude of the Afro-Asians for not allowing us to lead them in the traditional Conservative direction after we had given them independence. As I said at the Brighton Conference, to a large extent the Europeanism of the Conservative Party was simply imperialism with an inferiority complex.

In the event of course de Gaulle broke off the negotiations. Many people have been astonished to find that the result has not been economic disaster for Britain, on the contrary our exports to the Common Market countries are still rising faster than the exports of the Common Market countries to one another. But the political balance inside the Common Market may change. I think it will. We may soon have governments in Germany and Italy which share our view rather than the views which used to be held by Adenauer and de Gaulle and although mortality is out of fashion in European politics, even de Gaulle will not be there for ever. The real question is how much of the Common Market will be left to negotiate with if de Gaulle does last another five or seven years. For the Gaullist veto has destroyed the psychological sense of community on which the Common Market depended for its progress. With the destruction of this psychological sense of community the Common Market has become a prison instead of a power house. So long as de Gaulle is there it is unlikely to achieve anything in the field of functional integration and its achievement will be limited at best to the completion of the tariff changes provided for in the Rome Treaty. Even this minimum achievement may depend on German concessions to France in the agricultural negotiations now taking place.

In any case Britain has now no real alternative but to treat the world as the main field for her endeavour and to adapt her policies in Europe to suit her major objectives in world affairs, to promote co-operation between East and West, to halt the arms race and the Cold War, and to narrow the economic gulf between North and South. I want to make a few suggestions in these fields.

### **The Test-Ban Treaty**

The test-ban has an historical importance because it is the first clear declaration by America and Russia of a common interest in halting the arms race. But whether or not it has permanent meaning will depend on following it up with other steps which exploit this common interest. There is no doubt what the best step would be. It would be to stabilise the military relationship between Russia and the West in Europe and to stop the immediate further spread of nuclear weapons. These two objectives are intimately connected because most of the countries which could produce nuclear weapons in the immediate future are on one side or the other of the Iron Curtain in Europe.

Neither side at the moment shows any intention of risking the use of force to cross the international frontier that runs from Stettin to Trieste. Moreover, as Mr. Robert Macnamara has insisted, the balance of both atomic and conventional forces is fairly equal at the present time. Thus both sides have every interest in stabilising the balance of military power in Europe so that the arms race does not continue at least in Europe and then in reducing the level at which the balance is maintained. The first step would be the establishment of control posts on both sides of the Iron Curtain to prevent clandestine reinforcement of the existing strengths, the second step would be to try to reach agreement on reciprocal force reductions on both sides and perhaps also on the redeployment of atomic weapons. It is very important to separate this conception of controlling arms in Europe from the much more ambitious conception of disengagement which I also favour. Arms control implies the reduction and control of forces which confront one another across the Iron Curtain. Disengagement implies the physical separation of forces. For example in the old Gaitskell-Healey plan, it implied the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the whole of Germany, Poland and Hungary, of course keeping them out of Czechoslovakia too.

### **The German Problem**

This second step of withdrawing forces would be profoundly dangerous to peace unless it were accompanied by a solution of the German problem which was acceptable to both East and West and to the Germans. Such a solution of the German problem, implying as it does some form of German unification, is frankly at the moment not on the political horizon. The Russians have made it repeatedly clear that they are not prepared even to discuss it. All I want to say to my German friends on this is that they would gain as much as anyone through the establishment of a sure

guarantee of security by effective arms control on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Moreover co-operation between East and West on European security would at least provide a more favourable context for discussing the political problems of German unity than the uncontrolled continuation of the present arms race. I believe myself that if once Russia and the West had learned confidence in one another's military intentions by the experience of co-operation and arms control in Europe, all sorts of political possibilities would open which at the moment are firmly closed.

### **Britain's Independent Deterrent**

I must say one word here about the relevance of Britain's so-called independent so-called deterrent to all this. It can be argued that in a sense Britain's role in the negotiations for a test ban did depend historically on her possession of atomic weapons. But that is over now. The real question is the next step. And the next step must be some agreement to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and some agreement on arms control in both parts of Europe. For this second step Britain's possession of independent nuclear power and even more the extravagant claims made by the present British Government for the importance of her nuclear power are a very serious obstacle indeed. It will not be possible to persuade the other European countries to accept an arms control agreement which freezes Britain in a position of permanent superiority over them in the nuclear field. If the Prime Minister's main aim is to produce a Bonn-Paris atomic axis against Britain and the United States then he's going the right way about it. He has told the world that no country will get to the peace table unless it is a nuclear power. In the next breath he says that Britain and America will do their best to prevent Germany from becoming a nuclear power and from thus qualifying to be at the peace table. He could not have told the Germans more clearly that if they want any influence over their own future they must make an atomic alliance with de Gaulle. This is only a small part of the price which Europe and the world must pay for the Prime Minister's electoral obligation to feed his Party's dinosaurs.

The next twelve months are going to be critical for Europe and the world as well as for the Conservative party in Britain. The Prime Minister's absolute refusal to consider sharing the ultimate control of NATO's atomic weapons with our European allies has condemned Britain to a purely obstructive role in the very critical negotiations which are now taking place on this issue. He is blocking the way to that agreement on stopping the spread of atomic weapons which he pretends to want and is playing into the hands of all the people who stand for anarchy and reaction in world affairs. Again and again when I have been discussing this problem recently with Frenchmen or Germans, they have quoted back at me the statements of Sir Alec Douglas-Home, Mr. Macmillan or Mr. Thorneycroft, that the independent possession of atomic weapons is the absolute pre-condition of any influence in world affairs. Moreover, so long as the Prime Minister insists that you cannot trust the Americans to come to your help in a crisis and that therefore you must have atomic weapons in order to trigger off the American Strategic Air Command against

the will of the American Government, he is strengthening and accelerating that very trend in the United States to reduce America's liabilities in Europe which is the excuse for his position.

### **Co-operation with Soviet Union**

On Afro-Asia and the Middle East there is much we can and must do on our own. There is also much we must seek to do in co-operation with the Soviet Union. I am increasingly convinced of the necessity to seek some agreement with the Soviet Union on halting or controlling arms deliveries to the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia. I do not think that even in the context of the Cold War these arms deliveries buy political support. They enormously complicate all the political and economic problems faced by the local peoples, and increase the risk of a conflict dragging in the major powers against their will. Whether or not the Russians at this time are interested in a comprehensive agreement to control such delivery it is impossible to say. But I think it is very well worth while exploring their willingness to consider such agreements on certain areas. The two areas I would concentrate on at present would be Africa and the Middle East. In Africa there is a good chance now of getting the local governments to co-operate in the search for an agreement to prevent the arms race from spreading to their continent.

The second understanding which I think we must try to reach with the Russians over Africa and Asia is not to take military advantage of the political changes which are inevitably going to occur. One such agreement has already been reached over Laos in South East Asia, and so far, although there is a good deal of misunderstanding by both sides of the assumptions on which their adversaries made the agreement, there is a serious attempt both by the Russians and the Americans to carry it out. To some extent the Americans forced the Russians to make a similar agreement about Cuba. The Cuban agreement was analogous with the Laotian one because the Russians persuaded the Americans to accept the existence of the Castro regime and the Americans imposed the condition that the Russians should not take military advantage of the existence of a pro-Communist regime in Cuba.

Such agreements may appear to Africans and Asians as a new form of collective colonialism, as an attempt by the external powers to limit their freedom of action in certain fields where independent states should have full freedom unless they are accompanied by a positive programme of economic assistance for raising standards of life. All I will say about that is that the Afro-Asian countries want trade rather than aid and this is in any case the only way to help them in the long run. The Western world must be prepared to open its markets to Afro-Asian products—not only to the traditional exports of tropical foodstuffs and raw materials but also to the labour-intensive manufactured goods which they have to start producing and exporting if they are going to raise their standard of living by trade. And this in turn means that the Western World must be prepared to plan its own industrial expansion so as to make room for the rising exports of the Afro-Asian countries.



### The United Nations

I believe the sort of programme I have outlined would be much more acceptable to the Afro-Asians if we continue to strengthen and expand the role of the United Nations as the supreme authority in world affairs. It is the only authority in which the Afro-Asian countries are fully represented. It is the only organisation in the world today where countries which are weak in military or economic power have the status to which their populations would otherwise entitle them. The Afro-Asians have shown a noticeable reluctance so far to involve the United Nations in the settlement of their own internal differences. It was disappointing that attempts to solve the Morocco-Algerian problem were made completely outside the framework of the United Nations and much the same of course is true of the problem between Malaysia and Indonesia in the Far East. But there is no doubt that the reluctance of the Afro-Asians to involve the UN in their own affairs is partly due to the fear that if the UN is involved the major powers would pursue their private quarrel and treat the Afro-Asian problem as a battlefield in the Cold War.

### The Remains of Empire

We in Britain have a major national interest here, because I do not see any other answer to the problem of our residual colonies. By the middle of 1964 we'll have thirty-seven colonies left with populations of under a million of which twenty-two have populations of under a hundred thousand. Hardly any of them are capable of defending or supporting themselves as independent states. We must try to develop some means by which the United Nations can assume the responsibility for their defence and foreign policy if these small territories are to have any long term future other than involuntary absorption by the larger ones.

## 4. Conclusion

**T**HIS has been, I admit, a very general survey. In world affairs where you have to operate amid the interaction of a thousand variables, there are no detailed maps on which you can trace the exact route to follow. But it is possible and essential to identify the main features of the landscape ahead and to preserve a strong sense of direction. That is all I have tried to do this evening — to state the major objectives at which a Labour Government must aim and to describe the major factors which must decide our route towards them — factors whose general shape are unlikely to change despite the inevitable shifts in the policies and personalities of governments.

Let me conclude by returning to my basic theme. Britain is a world power, whether we like it or not. History has saddled her with interests and responsibilities in every continent. The structure of her economy prohibits a regional approach to international affairs. There are some in all three British political parties who regret Britain's global responsibilities and would like to disengage from them at almost any cost. I do not share their view. On the contrary, we should count ourselves fortunate that we have the power to exert some influence in every continent. For no country in the world is now an island — the economic prosperity and the physical survival of every people on the earth now depends on the solution of the global problems I have been discussing. There is no cause for us in Britain to regret that we must play a direct part in their solution.

But, though we are still a world power, we are no longer in a position to impose our views by force — least of all by nuclear force. It used to be said that you could do anything with bayonets except sit on them; the only thing you can do with the hydrogen bomb is to sit on it. The impotence of excessive power has never been so obvious. Britain's greatness in the modern world will depend not on her power of genocide but on her ability to work with others, on her capacity for winning consent by the cogency of her arguments and the force of her example as well as by her readiness to give the relevant form of economic and military aid in case of need. I believe that the Labour Party's understanding of this fundamental change in the meaning of Britain's greatness is perhaps its highest claim to power.

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