

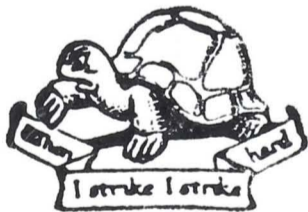


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**POLICY
AND WEAPONS
IN THE
NUCLEAR AGE**

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ONE SHILLING

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POLICY AND WEAPONS IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

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I. THE ATOMIC AGE

THE ages of human history have commonly been classified according to the nature of the tools and weapons in use—the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and so on. It is also possible to distinguish between relatively quiescent periods, when the established order and balance of power have been unchallenged, and periods of ferment and change with actual or threatened violence. The present age is one of ferment, in which the relations between the white and coloured sections of mankind are undergoing profound change: and the combination of this fact with the strain that exists between the Communist and non-Communist world produces a situation in which the use of violence on a minor scale is continuous and the possibility of major war is never wholly absent from our minds.

In this bellicose atmosphere the recent discovery of how to unleash atomic energy has been applied far more to weapons than to tools. It is as yet too early to say whether the words 'Atomic Age' are more than a catch-phrase as applied to methods of production: but it is certainly true that we have moved into an age in which methods of war have been changed as never before: and since the thought of war plays so large a part in our lives we are obliged to recast completely our plans for defence. We must equally review our ideas of the purposes for which force, in its modern forms, may be used in human affairs; that is to say, we must re-examine both foreign policy and indeed our whole political philosophy.

A New Era

The more we learn about the nature of the new weapons, the more apparent does it become that we are living in an entirely new era. First on the list come the nuclear weapons—atom and hydrogen bombs and missiles. The atomic bomb is based on a principle which has great possibilities for application to peaceful uses, and it was at first supposed that there would be great, if not insuperable difficulty in increasing its size and destructive power. The hydrogen bomb uses the atomic explosion—nuclear fission—to start off a different process—fusion. Both weapons, therefore,

can conveniently be described as nuclear weapons and the production of either depends on supplies of fissionable material. The hydrogen bomb, however, involves an additional process which is infinitely more destructive and for which no peaceful use has so far been discovered. There do not appear to be any substantial difficulties either in progressively increasing the size and power of hydrogen weapons. Further, the task of linking in this one weapon the fission and fusion processes, which was at first believed to be enormously expensive, has now been greatly cheapened. **The manufacture and holding of large stocks of hydrogen bombs is well within the economic capacity of a great power, and the making of some hydrogen bombs may be within the capacity of any industrial country.**

What the H-bomb Means

Although no one has yet dropped a hydrogen bomb on a modern city, with its masses of steel, concrete and brick, there is sufficient evidence to estimate what the effects would be. A hydrogen bomb weighing about eight tons has an explosive power 1,000 times greater than that of the atomic bomb which fell on Nagasaki: it may also be described as equivalent to 20 megatons (i.e., 20,000,000 tons) of T.N.T. The blast and suction effects from such a weapon would destroy all buildings within a radius of five miles—i.e., over an area of nearly eighty square miles. It would cause severe damage to all buildings within ten miles, and the resultant blocking of streets, etc., would disrupt urban life over an area of at least 300 square miles: minor damage would extend over an area three times greater than this. There is some modest consolation in the fact that if a more powerful bomb is used, the radius of destruction increases only as the cube root of the explosive power. Consequently, a bomb equivalent to 40 megatons of T.N.T. would give a radius of destruction 25 per cent. and an area of destruction 50 per cent. greater than would a 20 megaton bomb.¹

A 20 megaton bomb must also be expected to start widespread fires, igniting timber and other equally inflammable material within a radius of at least ten, and perhaps up to fifteen miles. There is also the far more widely disseminated peril of 'radioactive fall-out,' the nature of which will be discussed later, in connection with possible Civil Defence measures.

In a debate in the House of Commons on 6th December, 1954, Mr. Philip Noel-Baker summarised the perils of hydrogen warfare and applied them to British conditions as follows:

'If one hydrogen bomb fell on this Palace of Westminster, the area of total destruction would be nine miles across—out to Poplar, Wandsworth Common, Hammersmith and Primrose Hill. The area of heavy damage would be twenty miles across—from Enfield to the far side of Wimbledon Common. There might be casualties from radioactivity in Reading, Oxford, Cambridge and elsewhere.'²

We might be inclined to take comfort from the reflection that these con-

¹ For a description of the form and effects of Atomic and Hydrogen Bomb explosives see 'Nuclear Warfare: the Facts' by John Moore in *Fabian Journal* No. 15, March 1955.

² *Hansard*, Vol. 535, Col. 614.

jectures, however reasonably founded, still are conjectures and might be falsified in the event. Unfortunately for this optimistic view, we have to remember that, up to now, the prophecies of those best qualified to judge have erred in being under—rather than over—estimated. The most disquieting feature of the hydrogen explosion in the Pacific was that its effect and range were vastly greater than had been predicted.

No Sure Defence

In the present state of knowledge there is no means of preventing the delivery of these weapons by a determined enemy. If an attempt is made to deliver them by piloted aircraft, great loss might be inflicted on the raiders and several of the weapons might be destroyed before one reached its target: but its efficacy would, from the enemy's point of view, repay the loss. Nor is he, indeed, obliged to adopt this expensive method, since he can use guided missiles with atomic or hydrogen warheads. To quote again from Mr. Noel-Baker's speech:

' American Service authorities are talking officially about what they call the I.B.M.—the inter-continental ballistic missile. This super V.2., which carries a tremendous hydrogen warhead and has a range of 5,000 miles, is capable of travelling at 4,000 miles an hour and being guided to the city to be attacked. We are told that it will be in quantity production in seven years.'

A good deal of effort has been expended in the attempt to produce a counter-missile which can direct itself on to the moving offensive missile and destroy it in mid-career: yet again, the offensive missile can be equipped with devices which will deflect counter-missiles from its path. There are some who point out, truly enough, that so far in the history of warfare, every offensive invention has been followed by a countervailing discovery for the defence; and who argue, much more questionably, that this is always bound to happen. It is difficult to see how it can happen in this particular field. The offensive missile is aimed at a stationary target, the counter-missile at a moving target. The counter-missile must be designed to arrive at a particular point; the deflecting device has only to ensure that the counter-missile arrives anywhere other than that particular point. The task of the offensive missile is therefore much simpler, and we must, for the present, proceed on the assumption that guided missiles with nuclear warheads cannot be diverted.

The Revolution in Warfare

The wide-ranging effect of the hydrogen bomb makes it unnecessary to drop it with precision. To pursue the example quoted above, the effect on Britain will be much the same whether the bomb falls on the Palace of Westminster or five miles away from it in any direction. More simply still, if the enemy drops a hydrogen bomb into the sea near a port he may render the whole area inapproachable for months or years: the significance of this for a country which cannot live without imported food does not need to be emphasised.

Of all the new discoveries, it is the nuclear weapons which have attracted most attention and on which most effort has been expended.

Research has not, however, stood still in the other two main fields of destructive science—gas and bacteriological warfare. Some of the gases now known are not detectible, until too late, by any of the bodily senses and will destroy anyone who is not completely enveloped in protective clothing. The offensive power does not, however, possess anything like so great an advantage in this field as in that of nuclear warfare, and plans for gas warfare are always liable to be frustrated by the weather. Both these considerations apply also to bacteriological warfare, and it is probable that at least as much progress has been made, here, in defensive as in offensive methods. It is always possible that some fresh discovery may bring one or other of these instruments into the forefront of consideration: but, as matters now stand, it is the nuclear weapons which are responsible for the revolution in warfare, and must dominate our thinking.

2. CIVILISATION AND SURVIVAL

Is it scare-mongering to suggest that a war waged with hydrogen bombs and missiles would mean the destruction of the human race, or the end of civilisation? Perhaps it is: the literal destruction of the whole of mankind would be a prodigious task, even with modern weapons, and it is probable that both the will and the means to wreak destruction would themselves have been destroyed before that end was attained. The destruction would, however, fall most heavily on the greatest centres of population and would be particularly directed against cities, transport, administration, and anything which makes possible the existence of highly-organised communities. Mankind would be thrust back to a more primitive stage of existence. If we look for any comparable situation we shall not find it in recorded history. Man would suffer a set-back such as befell him when the ice-sheets extended themselves over his homeland 25,000 years ago, and he would suffer it not gradually but almost instantaneously. He would, of course, be far better equipped with knowledge for the re-building of his world than were his forbears in the Ice Age; and for this reason it may be an exaggeration to speak of the destruction of civilisation. But this historical comparison may serve to give some measure of the danger which hangs over us. It is, of course, true that anything said in this strain applies with particular force to Britain, as a densely-populated and highly-organised country.

Test Explosions

The suggestion has been made that, even without war, a series of hydrogen explosions over the ocean or over deserts could so affect the atmosphere that the earth would become uninhabitable. It is true that atomic explosions do increase the radiation in the atmosphere and that this effect is disseminated over the whole world. If these explosions were sufficiently

frequent, the human race might suffer injuries comparable to those caused by excessive exposure to X-rays. Genetic mutations might also be caused, so that in the next generation there might appear either monsters or beings less well adapted for survival than ourselves. Knowledge is not as yet sufficient for any precise assessment of this risk. Some scientists hold that the 70 or more explosions which have so far occurred have already put mankind in peril; others consider that test explosions can proceed as at present planned without serious risk, though they admit the need to watch the problem. No one is prepared to deny the *potential* danger, and there is, therefore, a good *prima facie* case for an international agreement to refrain from, or, at least, to restrict the number of further test explosions.

An agreement of this kind could not be secretly broken, since atomic explosions are readily detected wherever they occur: it would protect mankind from a danger of unknown, but possibly enormous, magnitude; it would provide some relief to international tension. In defence of test explosions, the United States Atomic Energy Commission argues that those so far conducted have disclosed the dangers of 'radioactive fall-out,' and that if this discovery had not been made the Americans and their allies would have been left in perilous ignorance of one of the worst injuries which a potential enemy might inflict. Against this, however, we should notice that the official American, and British, view is that while the NATO powers are at present in advance of the Soviet Union in knowledge of thermo-nuclear weapons, this lead might well be reduced by further discoveries. If, therefore, a standstill on test explosions halts the progress of knowledge in this field, it will confirm for the NATO powers the advantage they now possess.

Would H-bombs be Used ?

We may assume, then, that a war waged with hydrogen bombs would cause an unparalleled disorganisation of human life. Can we also assume that, if war breaks out, these weapons are certain to be used? It is well-known that at the present moment the Soviet Union and her satellites are capable of putting into the field a far greater number of divisions than can the NATO Powers, and that there is probably more fire-power in a Soviet than in a NATO division. Consequently, a conflict in Europe, waged with 'conventional,' i.e., non-nuclear, weapons, would result in a Soviet occupation of the continent, placing this country in an indefensible position.

It is true that the NATO Powers have a greater industrial potential than the Soviet bloc, and, in particular, that their steel production is greater: and some have drawn from this fact the conclusion that the Soviet Union could not hope for ultimate victory and would not therefore attempt the conflict. Industrial power and steel production, however, have a long-term rather than a short-term effect. A belligerent with inferior steel production cannot maintain forces in the field as long as its rival: but it can, and in this instance would, put a much larger force into the field at the start of the conflict. If, by this means, it can over-run a large part of its enemy's industrial territory, the potential future advantage disappears.

Choice for the West

In this situation, two alternative courses of action are open to the NATO Powers. First, they have a larger population than the Soviet bloc (it is assumed that, for some time to come China would have neither the will nor the power to lend her people to a European campaign) and they could extract from this population a number of divisions and a fire-power greater than that of their enemy. To get the divisions, however, they would have to impose on themselves a measure of conscription as great as that now borne by Soviet citizens. To obtain the fire-power they would have to cut ruthlessly at the administrative 'tail' of their armies. This does not mean, as is sometimes optimistically supposed, a mere cutting-out of frills or reduction in the number of batmen: such measures would be quite inadequate. It means requiring the Western soldier to accept, with regard to his recreation, his quarters, his leave, even his letters from home, a far more primitive standard than he now enjoys. There seems no likelihood of the Western Powers pursuing this course. The second alternative is to invoke the help of nuclear weapons, if only in the comparatively mild form of atomic cannon. It is true that these weapons are also available to the other side, but their introduction into the conflict so changes its nature that the result is no longer a foregone conclusion by mere weight of numbers.

The dilemma of the West, then, is this. Despite the advances in industry and standard of life made by the Soviet Union, she is still, in comparison with the West, a more primitive and less technical civilisation. A decision by the West, not to use at least atomic weapons on the battlefield, is a decision to deprive herself of her scientific advantages: and the price of this decision is the adoption of a primitive way of life. It can hardly be contended that the West is bound by some rule of chivalry to keep war on the conventional level. **The guilt of war lies on the aggressor, and its wickedness lies in the fact that it is an appeal to physical force rather than to reason and justice: the power that makes this appeal cannot then claim that the conflict shall be conducted only with those weapons that suit it best.**

No Restraint in War

It is this consideration which makes it impossible to believe that the use of nuclear weapons would necessarily stop at the use of atomic cannon. A belligerent who believes himself to be the victim of aggression and to be justified in using force at all (and most, if not all, belligerents do believe this), and who believes that he can avoid defeat by the use of superior scientific weapons, will, sooner or later, use those weapons. We must conclude that if world war broke out we should certainly witness the use of atomic weapons in battle at an early stage, and that there is no solid ground for believing that, either immediately or later, the full range of nuclear weapons would not be used against whatever targets were considered appropriate.

Can we avoid this conclusion by ensuring that the nuclear weapons are not there to be used? Can we, that is to say, secure international action not merely to prohibit their use but to destroy those already in

existence and prevent their manufacture in the future? There is a long history of proposals and discussions to this end, all of which have been frustrated by one fundamental difficulty. No scheme is of any value unless its enforcement is certain. A scheme with loop-holes for evasion is actually a dis-service to mankind, since it would put a predominance of power into the hands of the least scrupulous nations. Effective enforcement means that there must be an international inspectorate able to go where it wishes, see what it wishes, and require answers to all relevant questions. Failure to comply with its requests must be regarded as something to be met by immediate and effective sanctions; and whatever body is charged with the duty of enforcement and sanctions must not be liable to frustration by the veto of a single power.

The Difficulty of Disarmament

At the critical points in the discussions, the Soviet Union was never prepared to accept these essentials. By now, the opportunity may have been lost. It is certain that the United States and the Soviet Union already possess stocks of both atom and hydrogen weapons. No international inspectorate which began its work now could hope to discover those stocks, or to get any guarantee that they had been destroyed, other than the word of the Government concerned, which would not be sufficient to satisfy the other party. If, by long and patient diplomacy, some greater measure of mutual trust could be established between these nations, this obstacle would be less serious and it might then be possible to frame an effective disarmament convention embracing both conventional and unconventional weapons.

This possibility, however remote it may now appear, is one reason why neither Britain nor any other country would be well-advised to make a complete switch of its military preparations from conventional to nuclear weapons. A nation whose only effective instruments of force are nuclear weapons is in an intolerable position. At every phase of the 'Cold War' it must either give way when even the most limited threat or pressure is applied to it, or it must let loose on the world the disaster whose magnitude has been described above. Once that situation has arisen, there is no possibility at all of any agreement to abolish or control nuclear weapons. The door to agreement on this subject is at present locked; but we should be throwing away the key if we were to commit ourselves exclusively to nuclear weapons for our defence.

Fear of Retaliation

While, therefore, the possibility of future agreement on the manufacture of nuclear weapons cannot be entirely ruled out: and while this possibility has, as has just been argued, some effect on our immediate policy, nevertheless, we cannot suppose that such an agreement appears at present as an obvious or an easy way of escape for mankind from the overhanging disaster. There remains one other possibility to be examined. Will nations be

restrained from throwing hydrogen bombs at each other, either by horror at the frightful nature of the act, or by dread of retaliation?

Experience does not suggest that the former emotion alone will be sufficient. In the first world war, gas was used to the extent that the belligerents thought it would serve their purposes. It was not used in the last war, partly through fear of retaliation and partly because the defences against it were such as to make the belligerents believe that effort directed towards gas warfare would not be as effective as the same effort directed into other channels. The V-2 was used by Hitler and the atom bomb by the Allies, and each weapon would have been used by the other side equally, had they possessed it at the appropriate moment. The considerations determining the use of a weapon seem to be military, political, scientific or economic, but not moral.

Among the military considerations, however, fear of retaliation is real and weighty. It is extremely improbable that the bomb would have been dropped on Hiroshima if we had believed that there was any enemy capable of retaliating in kind. Further, the whole record of post-war diplomacy shows that both sides have been held in check by a dread of what war would mean. In earlier periods of history, great wars have arisen from less tension and ill-will than was generated by the blockade of Berlin; and Fear was the unseen third party who sat at the negotiating table in Korea and compelled each belligerent in turn to make grudging concessions. The fear of retaliation is certainly a sufficiently powerful force to avert war for a time. Even if world war broke out, fear might, for a time, cause both sides to use only conventional weapons. With this in mind we may reach the gloomy, but surely correct conclusion, that in a world which possesses hydrogen bombs at all, there is measurably less likelihood of war, in the near future, if these weapons are possessed by *both* camps, so that the fear of retaliation can operate.

No Permanent Safeguard

It is much more doubtful, however, whether fear can be relied on to keep the peace permanently. The present form of nuclear weapons is not the last word: Governments today live in an atmosphere of intense scientific competition, striving to make some new discovery that may give them a lead on their rivals. At any moment, one group or the other may believe itself to possess a secret that will give it that narrow margin, whether in time, accuracy or destructive power, which will ensure victory. Discoveries made in methods of defence against nuclear attack may tempt nations to believe that the risk is worth taking. If the present international tension continues indefinitely, the dangerous doctrine that 'We may as well get it over,' now held only by cranks and fanatics, may become more fashionable. If we are to believe that the peace can always be kept by fear, we must believe that nations can continue indefinitely to practise caution while living in a situation that ceaselessly frays the nerves.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly of all, we have to remember that although man is at times capable of prudence, he is by nature, and as

a condition of survival, an adventurous rather than a timid creature. If he is to be delivered from his present peril, it must be by some constructive effort towards the better ordering of human affairs: he cannot be permanently restrained by so pallid and negative an emotion as fear. It may be, as the old stories suggest, that man would have fared better if he could have refrained from the pursuit of knowledge and power—if he had refused the gift of fire from Prometheus, if Pandora had not opened her box, and if our first parents could have kept their hands from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. But the choice, once made, cannot be reversed: today we are still the children of Adam and Eve and the pupils of Prometheus. Our present crisis has its roots in our own nature; if we were the kind of creature that could be permanently restrained by fear we should not now stand in this peril. **But if man is incurably adventurous, he is not incurably foolish: he has repeatedly shown a capacity to change his ways of life and thought, so as to make his discoveries serve his welfare rather than his destruction. It is to this task that we must now turn.**

3. FOREIGN POLICY: THE RECORD

The argument so far advanced has been, in brief, that a war waged with the new weapons would inflict on the human race the greatest injury it has suffered in recorded history and would bring to an end, perhaps for a considerable time, all large-scale organised activity: and further, that if world war breaks out, there is no sufficient ground for supposing that the new weapons would not be used. If, at some points, the argument has been stated solely in terms of power politics and of how men *would*, rather than how they *should*, behave, this must not be taken as an assumption that we must resign ourselves to nuclear warfare or as unawareness of the limitless suffering that would be caused. The purpose has rather been to emphasise that we now live in an age in which war means something totally different from what it has ever meant before.

The old conservative view—less fashionable than it used to be—that war is an inevitable recurrent phenomenon in human affairs, and the Leninist doctrine that Communism would spread by a series of ‘frightful collisions’ between a Communist State and its enemies, are alike outdated. ‘Frightful collisions’ today will spread nothing but disaster. In these conditions, defence preparations are not without importance, and an attempt will be made later to consider what kind of preparations are likely to make the best sense: but they are important, not as potential instruments of victory in war, but only in so far as they contribute, together with more attractive and constructive measures, to the making of a world in which war is less likely to occur. Therefore, in order to obtain a proper perspective, we must, before considering defence requirements, make some examination of foreign policy.

Soviet Expansion

If we examine the record of events since 1945, there is one conclusion that, whatever our prejudices or predilections, we cannot escape. The Soviet Union has repeatedly shown that she will snatch anything that is within her grasp, and which she believes can be snatched without starting a world war. The severance of East Germany from the rest of the country and its reduction to the status of a satellite; the establishment of police-states in the Balkans and the arming of the puppet regimes there, in disregard of the Peace Treaties; the refusal to honour the agreement whereby free elections were to have been conducted, under United Nations supervision, throughout the whole of Korea; the blockade of Berlin—all these were clear indications that the Soviet Union had decided to pursue what she considered to be her own best interests by unilateral action without regard for treaties or the rights of other nations.

It has been contended that all this was an inevitable or even a justifiable reaction to a menace from the United States. The Soviet course of action, however, was begun immediately after the war at a time when the United States was drastically reducing her armed forces and had not begun the series of agreements for overseas bases which is now so large a factor in the international situation. The Soviet Union may, indeed, have been alarmed because U.S. armed forces in the Far East were kept at a high level and because, at that time, the United States alone possessed the atomic bomb. These facts, however, can hardly justify persistent breaches of obligations, particularly since the facts were well known at the time that most of the obligations were undertaken. Moreover, those who argue that the presence of United States forces in other countries is a provocation, or a cause of aggression, must notice that it was not until after United States' forces had been withdrawn from South Korea that the attack was launched against that country.

The Western Alliance

The effect of the Soviet course of action was that the Western Powers drew more closely together, notably through the Brussels and North Atlantic Treaties. The United States increased her armaments and fashioned a world-wide network of agreements for bases. The world was now divided into two camps, and it became impossible for either of them to take any step, even one genuinely intended for defence alone, without increasing the suspicions of the other. Soviet policy was accordingly directed towards dividing and weakening the Western Powers. Like Hitler in earlier years, the Soviet Union did not search merely, or mainly, for strategic advantages or the material weaknesses of her opponents: she looked for their errors of judgment, the chinks in their moral armour, and for the instances in which democracy did not live up to its own standards. She found, in particular, the gigantic error of judgment committed by the United States in its continued support of Chiang Kai-Shek, and the military and moral embarrassments caused to Britain and France by the nationalist movements in their overseas empires.

It has been remarked earlier that we live not only in the Atomic Age but in the Age of the Rise of Coloured Peoples. Modern means of communication and transport have made the coloured nations aware of the standards of life and political ideas of the West, and have linked them in a common demand for political and economic advancement. The Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April 1955 was, if nothing else, a forum in which any coloured nation with a grievance against the whites could proclaim its wrongs and receive sympathy. This unity may not last—the differences in history, culture, politics and economics, which separate a Central African from a Malay are at least as wide as those which separate either from a European—but for the present it is a significant factor in world affairs.

Over a large part of the world, the Soviet Union has been able to unite her own power-policy with the protest of the coloured against white. It is a debateable question how far the Chinese people like or support their present Government: what is undoubted is that the long-felt resentment against foreign interference in Chinese affairs is still a powerful force. The United States support of Chiang Kai-Shek causes the Americans to occupy the position once held by the British as the chief representatives, in Chinese eyes, of foreign intrusion: and whatever else the Chinese may think of their Government, they will support it in its resistance to the United States. The present Chinese Government has, in fact, done for the Chinese what Hitler did for the Germans—it has obliged the rest of the world to treat them seriously as a Power: and it was this achievement which, more than anything else, cemented Hitler's hold over the German people.

Communism and Colonies

Similarly, it is extremely doubtful whether any substantial part of the peoples in the more disturbed parts of the British and French Empires want a Communist regime. They know, however, that they live at a far lower standard of life than the white man; they ascribe this, with greater or less truth in different circumstances, to the nature of Imperial rule. Moreover, quite apart from any economic grievances, they increasingly resent the white man's assumption of political and social superiority, and they will increasingly look towards Communism if no other and better method of achieving equality of status presents itself. The strength of this tendency will vary greatly, in accordance with the history, culture, political development and way of life of the different colonial possessions; but the tendency itself is world-wide. It is, of course, an essential element in Communist policy to try to frustrate any method other than Communism, of satisfying colonial aspirations. There are Colonial Empires much worse governed than the British, but not, at present, particularly subject to Communist attack, partly because they are not powerful and partly because, left to themselves, they can be relied on still to present a fruitful ground for Communist propaganda, whenever in the future it may suit Soviet strategy to turn in their direction. The British Empire, left to itself, is capable of turning into a group of friendly, self-governing and comparatively mature communities

which have consciously rejected Communism. Every step in this process reduces Communism's chances, and this is a compelling reason for a progressive colonial policy; but while the process is going on, the Imperial Power, however well-intentioned, must face the ungrateful task of introducing reforms with one hand and combating terrorism with the other.

The attitude of India, also, is influenced by these considerations. It has been a matter of pained surprise to many Americans that, after the generous sympathy they had expressed for India's grievances against Britain, the new India did not, as a matter of course, assume that America was in the right in her dispute with China. But so long as China is excluded from the United Nations, India cannot judge the Far Eastern situation dispassionately, for it will appear to her that here is an example of an Asian power being treated as an inferior by the West.

America and Preventive War

The factors so far discussed in the international situation have been Soviet expansion and the movement against imperialism, these two being distinct elements, but often inextricably intertwined. A third element, the behaviour of the United States, must now be considered. During and immediately after the war the trend of American policy was to seek to conciliate the Soviet Union and, at times, to regard old-fashioned British imperialism as the major obstacle to a satisfactory settlement of human affairs: it is now fashionable in America and in certain quarters in this country to condemn the Roosevelt and Truman administrations on this ground. The Soviet treatment of East Germany, the rejection of the Marshall Plan and the blockade of Berlin swung American policy steadily towards the conception of a 'free world' organising collective defence against possible Soviet aggression.

Once this tendency had begun there were many factors in American life and politics to give it a more positive content and to promote the dangerous idea of transforming plans for defence into a 'preventive war,' a 'war of liberation' or a 'crusade against Communism.' There were, in the first place, those economic and financial interests—to be found in any capitalist society but especially prominent in the United States—which, by their nature, detested Communism and saw in its extension to China the closing of a field of profitable activity. These interests were also aware of the profits to be made at home from an expansion of military expenditure. But this last was by no means a straightforward issue, since the same, or kindred interests were opposed to high taxation and were not infrequently attached to the isolationist tradition. Secondly, many American trade union leaders, both national and local, had experienced Communist tactics in the trade union world and were satisfied that they faced, in Communism, an unscrupulous and implacable enemy.

Thirdly, those Americans who, on liberal or radical grounds, were most strongly critical of their own country, were even more critical of Communism. An American who has spent much of his life protesting and working against persecution, intolerance and perversions of justice in

America sees no reason why he should condone persecution and judicial murder in the Soviet Union and the satellite countries. Finally, American public opinion as a whole was disturbed by the danger of Russian espionage, particularly after the disclosures of the Canadian Royal Commission on this subject. The extravagances of McCarthyism do not disprove the existence of this danger any more than the discrediting of the perjures of Titus Oates disproved the existence of a real danger to England in the reign of James II.

A Conflict of Desires

American detestation of Communism, therefore, cannot be dismissed as hysteria: it can more properly be compared to the state of English opinion towards Fascism in the late nineteen-thirties. Yet equally strong in the American public is a desire not to be involved in war and a dislike of seeing American soldiers engaged in fighting overseas. America, in fact, wants to hit Communism *and* to avoid war; and the jerky vacillations of American policy, so strikingly manifested over Indo-China, are largely explicable in terms of this conflict of desires. There is, indeed, a way of reconciling the two wishes that is, for America to abandon all idea of a 'war of liberation,' use her military strength for defence alone, and apply her wealth, technical knowledge and generosity to the task of helping the countries of the non-Communist world to achieve such a way of life and degree of self-confidence as will ensure that they reject Communism.

In its simplest terms, **the policy which the situation requires of the nations of the free world, and pre-eminently of the United States, is that they shall draw a line between themselves and the Communist Empires, make it clear that they will neither cross that line nor permit it to be crossed, and then devote their energies to making what is on their side of the line worth defending.** Such a policy appeals more readily to Britain than to America; not because the British are innately wiser than the Americans but because, schooled by adversity, they have become more aware of the limitations of power and the need for patience than has the younger, more powerful and more impetuous nation.

'Drawing a Line'

It is true that a policy of 'drawing a line' involves the continued existence of many evils. Nearly half the world will still be under tyrannical rule; the régimes in Spain and South Africa will enjoy an undeserved protection as nominally part of the 'free world'; the division of Germany, and of Korea, may continue indefinitely. These consequences, however, flow from the nature of force at the present time. If the evils of the world could be swept away at the cost of a few broken heads or an heroic Garibaldian campaign we might make the attempt. Today, however, the only legitimate use of force is to frustrate the attempts of tyranny to spread itself by aggression; existing evils must be left to be removed by time, patience and example.

What, then, is the task for Britain, placed between Communist aggres-

sion and American recklessness? Some would argue that the horrible nature of nuclear warfare has finally proved the pacifist case, and that we should abandon all military preparations. But the fundamental objection to pacifism has always been that if the virtuous resolve never to use force, the government of the world passes into the hands of the most unscrupulous people in it. This objection still stands: the fact that the unscrupulous now possess more powerful instruments of blackmail does not make the act of yielding to blackmail any wiser or more creditable.

Neutrality no Answer

Others would seek the answer in a policy of neutrality: but in the event of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union neutrality could not be maintained. The industrial potential, the geographical position and the world-wide connections of Britain make her so valuable that each contestant would be impelled to snatch at her, if only to prevent the other from doing so first. Only if Britain could afford a weight of armament capable of repelling or deterring both other powers, which she manifestly cannot, could she think of neutrality. Moreover, the withdrawal of Britain from the world scene would at one and the same time encourage Communist expansion by weakening the West, and discredit all counsels of prudence in the United States: by such a course of action Britain would make world conflict more likely and leave herself defenceless and unbefriended when it came.

A Free Defensive Alliance

Britain must therefore seek her safety as part of the safety of the Western Alliance. Nor need she accept this policy merely in the gloomy mood of one who recognises necessity, plain though that necessity is. So long as that alliance remains defensive, uncorrupted by the idea of 'preventive war' its cause is as just and as vital to mankind as that of the alliance which defeated Hitler. It is as true of Communism as of Nazism that its victory would mean the end of democratic institutions, personal liberty, scientific integrity and impartial justice. It is these things, and many others, which we summarise in the term 'free world,' and it is easy enough to find places and occasions where the 'free world' does not live up to its own standards. There are those in this country who, while safely behind the shield of the alliance with America, take pleasure in emphasising every political and moral defect of that country and every instance of folly or wickedness in British imperial rule, without considering what judgments they would have to pass if they applied the same standards to Communist countries.

It is well for democratic countries to be self-critical, but it is also well to keep a sense of proportion. The blemishes of the 'free world'—instances of denial of liberty, harsh administration, partisan justice—are, in the free world, recognised as blemishes, criticised, attacked and gradually corrected: in the totalitarian countries these evils form the recognised rule of life and basis of society.

The appearance in world affairs of the hydrogen bomb does not, therefore, invalidate the basic assumption of British policy, that she should be a member of a defensive alliance with the United States, the nations of Western Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth. This assumption remains true unless and until the present division of the world is ended by a general conciliation, that is to say, it remains true for the foreseeable future. So far from invalidating this assumption, the existence of the hydrogen bomb confirms and justifies it, provided that, in the phrase 'defensive alliance' equal stress is laid on both words.

Britain's Role

On the one hand, Britain must convince the United States that she has no intention of deserting the alliance; if confidence on that point were weakened, the Western camp would disintegrate and the Communist powers would be encouraged to commit aggression. On the other, she must convince the Soviet Union that there is no intention of launching a preventive war. While pursuing such a policy, Britain will no doubt be accused by some in America of weakness and appeasement, and by some in Russia of 'ganging-up with the American war-mongers': but the more prudent, and probably the more influential, elements in both countries will conclude that it is only on this basis that there is any chance of avoiding destruction.

It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to examine the details of foreign policy, but it may be worth mentioning certain conclusions which follow from this principle of the defensive alliance.

In the *first* place, the work done at the Geneva Conference of heads of Governments in July, 1955, must not be allowed to run to waste. It was apparent there that the United States and the Soviet Union are sufficiently in dread of the hydrogen bomb to have no intention of waging war on each other. If, however, this intention is to remain firm, a further effort must be made to reconcile the different approaches to the problems of European security and disarmament. This task the Conference deputed to the Foreign Ministers. It is for them to set forth, as frankly as possible, the fears and suspicions which each side entertains of the other, the actions which each believes the other could take, without sacrificing its safety, to allay those fears, and the concessions each is prepared to make to that end.

Atomic Energy for Peace

Second, we should welcome, and do our best to extend, the modest steps already taken towards international research into the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The plan for this purpose initiated by the United States and accepted by the Soviet Union, is at present only a minor element in the international situation, but potentially it is of great importance. It is an exercise ground for co-operation between otherwise hostile powers, and it helps to deliver men's minds from the assumption that atomic energy and suicidal war are synonymous.

Third, Britain must use all her influence with the United States to persuade that country to extract herself from the dangerous Formosan complication. At present, the American view is that Formosa must remain an American military outpost because American safety requires it. Even from a military standpoint, there is little evidence to support this view; and the argument is, in any case, the same as that employed by the Russians when they demanded bases in Finland in 1940. Whatever may be the right solution for Formosa, this is certainly the wrong one, and it is completely inconsistent with the concept of a defensive alliance. If, as has been suggested above, we must think of foreign policy in terms of drawing an agreed line between the Communist and non-Communist worlds, it is essential to the whole purpose and nature of the Western alliance that they do not try to draw the line in a fashion that is morally indefensible, militarily unnecessary and immediately dangerous.

Fourth, for reasons already given, Britain must redouble her efforts to extend self-government in the colonial empire.

These four measures are concerned with conciliation, and will all take time, greater or less, to produce results. But if the defences of the West are so weak as to invite aggression, no time will be allowed for the pursuit of humane and long-sighted policies. In the long run, defence is less important than constructive pacification: in the short run, it is more important. The **fifth** conclusion, therefore, is that Britain must provide herself with the most effective defence within her capacity. We have now to examine what this means in the age of the hydrogen bomb.

4. PLAN FOR BRITAIN

In the field of defence, the first and most important question for Britain to decide is whether she shall herself seek to make and possess hydrogen bombs. We have to accept the fact that if war is waged with these weapons, there is no known method of preventing an enemy from dropping them on Britain, with immeasurable results. The only available defence, therefore, lies in deterrence, in the fact that any nation will be much less likely to throw hydrogen bombs if it knows that the result will be retaliation in kind. If the Western alliance did not possess these weapons, the Communist powers could at any time require the West to choose between surrender and destruction.

Should Britain Make the Bomb ?

The question for Britain, then, is, do we make our own or do we rely entirely on the protection of America's hydrogen bombs? If we make the latter choice we abandon any hope of being able to influence American policy: the Americans will regard the British as, no doubt, a friendly and well-intentioned people, but a people not to be consulted when questions of power and policy are under discussion. Any proposals we may make for disarmament or for the control of atomic energy will be regarded,

throughout the world, as no more than an interested attempt to deprive others of a power we do not ourselves possess. At a time when prudence and moderation are most required, and when we are most able to supply these qualities, we should deprive ourselves of the power to do so and leave the world at the mercy of the most reckless counsellors in both camps. The idea of a splendid declaration by Britain that she will not touch the accursed thing has an immense appeal, but it is in fact the most subtle of all the temptations—a shirking of responsibility disguised as an heroic renunciation.

The decision to make hydrogen bombs involves decisions to provide ourselves with the aircraft capable of delivering them and to continue research into the production of guided missiles, which may in time become as effective a way of wielding hydrogen power as are bombs and aircraft. A further cognate decision has to be made concerning the places, in the territories of the NATO powers, from which retaliation can be launched. A retaliation intended to be launched from a place which the enemy could and would destroy at his first blow is no retaliation at all. This is a matter on which the Commonwealth nations cannot escape their responsibility. Britain's defence is their defence, and for Britain's defence it is necessary to convince a potential enemy that even if Britain could be struck down at once, retaliation would follow from other Commonwealth or NATO sources. Britain, like the United States, must take on the responsibility of making the bombs: plans for their disposal and delivery are a concern for all the NATO powers.

NATO's Strategy

In this connection it is necessary to consider afresh whether it is in the best interests of NATO as a whole to locate in Britain the airfields from which, in extremity, hydrogen retaliation would presumably be launched. Communist propaganda addressed to Britain has made great play with these airfields, not so much, perhaps, on account of their military importance, as because they are a convenient instrument for stirring up ill-will between Britain and America; and the difficulty, for Britain, in raising the question, would be to avoid the suspicion that she has fallen a prey to propaganda and is merely anxious to reduce her own risks while retaining the advantages of the alliance. It is, however, by no means self-evident that the best place for bases of retaliation is in a country comparatively near to the enemy and presenting, for a variety of reasons, an attractive target.

The decision about these bases was made before the era of the hydrogen bomb: it may be that even now, the most careful consideration would fail to disclose a place at once militarily better and politically practicable, in which event Britain would have to continue to accept the risk: but the question is one which requires dispassionate allied consideration. The bases in Britain are, of course, only some out of many in several countries; but it is equally true of the others that their siting was determined before the hydrogen era. All the partners in NATO must now review the location of bases, bearing in mind first, that the weapons of mass destruction can be

launched from much greater distances than when NATO's plans were first made; and, second, that an enemy's efforts to destroy such bases will be greatly intensified by the knowledge of the more terrible threat which they contain.

Defence Plans

If, then, Britain is to make hydrogen bombs and to concert with her allies the plans for their delivery, what other defence plans need she make? Have we travelled so far into the hydrogen age of warfare that conventional weapons are now irrelevant? This would be a false conclusion, based on a misconception of the purpose of defence preparations. Their primary purpose is not to win a war—a phrase which has progressively less meaning with each new invention—but to prevent it, and the purpose of hydrogen preparations is to prevent by deterring the enemy from all-out attack. Communism, however, has another technique, that of the Cold War.

This term is loosely used to cover anything from minor colonial disturbances to fierce and lengthy campaigns, as in Korea and Indo-China; but the use of a single term is justifiable, for the underlying idea is the same. It is the selection of places where geography and politics combine to put the opponents of Communism at the maximum moral and military disadvantage, and to create such degrees of disturbance as, without provoking a world war, will oblige anti-Communists either to engage in an expensive and dispiriting campaign or to see yet another slice of the world fall into the hands of their enemies. A sufficiently long series of successes in this Cold War would put so much of the world in Communist hands that the final prize of world dominion would seem fatally easy to grasp. Repelling aggression in the Cold War is therefore an essential part of the task of preventing a major conflict: and it is a task for which conventional weapons are necessary.

Localised War

Britain must not put herself in a position where her only reply to any provocation would be to threaten to use hydrogen bombs: that would be the shortest way to disaster. She must be capable of exercising local and limited power to repel local and limited challenges. This means that she must be capable of despatching forces of limited size—land, sea or air as circumstances make appropriate—to any of the parts of the world for which she is responsible. It may well prove that the expense of hydrogen preparations will impose a strict limit on what can be afforded in these other directions. If Britain finds that she cannot, with what she can afford, effectively defend her present commitments, she must make a rapid decision as to which commitments she can best abandon. As the example of Egypt shows, decisions of this kind can be taken with surprising speed, once the necessity has become plain.

This raises a large general question, only to be stated here, since its full consideration lies outside the scope of the present inquiry. At present it is assumed that a NATO Power which has imperial responsibilities can

regard its imperial policy as purely its own concern. In fact, these responsibilities are a NATO concern, both because of the demands they make on defence expenditure and because of the perils to which unwise imperial policy may expose the whole alliance: sooner or later NATO will have to devise machinery for framing concerted imperial policy.

Civil Defence

The making of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of at least some conventional forces must, together, impose a heavy strain on our resources, and a third burden must be added, that of Civil Defence. Enough has already been said about the effects, through fire and blast alone, of hydrogen explosions to show that we cannot think of Civil Defence Services operating in great cities in the way in which they operated in the last war. An area of some 100 square miles round the place where the bomb drops will contain no living creature, and irretrievable destruction will spread far beyond this limit. It is round the periphery of the doomed area that fires may be checked, human beings rescued, food brought in and some bare framework of social life re-erected. None of this, however, can be done unless, from the areas more remote from the disaster, there comes a powerful current of trained and organised energy: to create such a current is the real task of Civil Defence.

It is at this point that we must consider the phenomenon of 'radioactive fall-out'—the deadly snowfall of radioactive particles which, over areas far from the site of the explosion, can destroy life, and, with life, all hope of the revitalising energy which those areas should provide. The explosion of a hydrogen bomb lets loose a vast quantity of radioactive particles. By themselves these particles are light, and, if the bomb is exploded in the air, they are swept far above the earth's surface and descend so slowly and so thinly over a vast area as to constitute no immediate danger. If, however, the bomb were exploded on the ground, the particles would be made heavier by admixture with dust and earth; although at first swept upward they would descend more rapidly and more thickly, and consequently with lethal effect.

From present evidence it appears that the area affected would be oval in shape, about 200 miles long and 40 miles wide, about nine-tenths of it stretching down-wind and the remainder up-wind from the point of explosion. The inhabitants of half of this area would, unless adequately protected, receive a fatal dose within 36 hours: in the outer part of the area mortality would be high and few of the inhabitants would avoid serious, and possibly permanent, injury to their health. For adequate protection a shield of about two feet of concrete or three feet of packed earth is required. Since, in the event of hydrogen war, almost any area of Britain might be affected by 'fall-out,' the extensive provision of shelters of this kind appears to be essential if the Civil Defence services are to work at all. The 1955 *Statement on Defence*¹ argues, correctly, that effective shelter near the point

¹ C.M.D. 9391. H.M.S.O.

of burst is impossible, and concludes that we must think rather of light shelter from the more distant effects of the explosion. This conclusion, however, appears to under-estimate the problem. The type of shelter required is substantial; it must be capable of keeping its inmates alive for two days after a bomb had been dropped, and thereafter they must be able to emerge and take active part in the task of re-creating social life.

A Mobile Defence Corps

If, then, it appears at any time in the future that there is imminent danger of hydrogen bomb attack on this country, there must be large-scale movement, from the areas most likely to be directly hit, of all those whose presence in those areas is not essential. The regions to which they go must be provided with shelters against the effects of 'fall-out,' and must be prepared, in respect of public utilities and social services, to cope with a great increase in population. If hydrogen bombs fall, there must be an emergency machinery of government capable of taking control in the regions not directly affected by explosion.

All this involves military organisation and discipline; indeed, the concept of a Mobile Defence Corps using Army organisation and personnel is the soundest part of the whole of the *Statement on Defence*. No machinery of government, however, can function unless it can draw on adequate supplies of transport and equipment for fire-fighting and salvage; and unless it has the services of large numbers of people who are properly trained for these tasks and who will keep their heads in an emergency because training has given them confidence.

5. AN EFFECTIVE DEFENCE

Hydrogen bombs, conventional forces for the cold war, civil defence . . . how much more can Britain afford? What she surely cannot afford is to continue piling up weapons and training men on the assumption that she may have to wage a major conventional war. Cold War is only too likely to remain with us; hydrogen war looms menacingly on the horizon: of all contingencies, the waging of a great war solely with conventional weapons seems the least likely, and preparation against such a contingency is extremely expensive. If we attempt to make adequate provision against all contingencies, lack of resources will cause us to end without adequate provision against any of them; and it is on preparation against the least likely contingency that we must economise. It is at this point that the 1955 *Defence on Statement* is least satisfactory. Having recognised the paramount claim of hydrogen and cold war preparations, the Statement proceeds to speak of aircraft carriers and cruisers, divisions and strategic reserves, as if the hydrogen revolution had not occurred.

A decision to make hydrogen bombs ought to involve a marked increase in the proportion of the defence expenditure devoted to production and research, with correspondingly unavoidable reductions elsewhere. It is true that in the present state of knowledge the largest element in the expense of making hydrogen bombs is the creation of the plant for making the atomic 'triggers,' and that this expense has already been incurred. Nevertheless the remaining parts of the process are only relatively cheap, and if it is proposed to make any significant stock of bombs, the expense is bound to be great. Further, there is still a great deal to be learnt about methods of delivery of the hydrogen bomb and about the possibility of constructing guided hydrogen missiles which, while easier of delivery, would have a comparable quantitative effect to that of the bomb. Nor can it be supposed that knowledge in these fields will remain static: a decision to make hydrogen bombs involves a decision to conduct research on a scale which will ensure that this country keeps abreast of others in the attempt to increase the power and reduce the cost of these weapons.

Research

Even before the decision to make hydrogen bombs, the provision for research in the defence budget was widely criticised as being too small, and it is disquieting to find that there is no present intention of increasing it. The question at issue is not merely financial: it is concerned with the shortages of certain materials and of skilled labour. The 1955 *Statement on Defence*, complacently admitting that it has usually proved impossible to bring actual production up to the intended amount, seems to be aware of these difficulties but to have given them no serious consideration. There is, throughout the Statement, no acceptance of the fact that, as a result of the hydrogen decision, we have to search for every possible economy in conventional weapons consistent with retaining our capacity to deal with the cold war. It is, no doubt, easier to state this principle than to specify the economies: for the facts on which decisions must be based cannot, in the nature of the case, be fully available except to the Government. The following points affecting the three services, however, surely require to be considered.

The Royal Navy

The unresolved question with the Navy is that of the vulnerability of large ships, particularly aircraft carriers. Present policy is based on the belief that carriers are sufficiently able to elude or repel attack to be valuable as mobile bases for aircraft. There is a considerable weight of well-informed opinion against this view: but the programme of aircraft carrier construction is now so far advanced that it may be right, on balance, to accept the decision that has been made, despite the great expense involved. That expense, however, is increased by the further decision to maintain cruisers, against which a similar objection of vulnerability may be advanced. The cruisers are intended to help close the gap until the

new guided weapon ships come into service, and the Navy of the future is pictured as operating in 'battle groups' of aircraft carriers, guided weapon ships and their escorts. These groups cannot, however, operate indefinitely without bases, and, even if the ships are invulnerable, the bases certainly are not. May we not here be putting too many, and too expensive, eggs into a faulty basket?

Much attention is also paid to the problem of destroying enemy submarines. It is hardly likely that in a world possessing modern weapons an enemy would seek to subdue Britain by the process of submarine blockade; but the submarine may well take on a more menacing rôle as a carrier of guided missiles. If, however, submarines are likely to be effective in this capacity, it is remarkable that our own plans for naval warfare with guided weapons appear to be based less on submarines than on the more expensive and possibly more vulnerable 'battle groups.' The defence statement and the Navy Estimates¹ are, no doubt, hampered by considerations of security and by uncertainty as to the nature of future discoveries: but, for whatever reason, they do not combine to make a coherent naval policy.

The Army

The Army is the chief, though by no means the only, instrument of the Cold War, and this fact as once involves a considerable expenditure of manpower and money. In addition we are still thinking in terms of basing forces in Cyprus, either for use in the event of war or to exercise a rather ill-defined stabilising or police function in the Middle East—and this despite the recognition that a base for the same purposes in Egypt is useless. Cyprus may, of course, be considered as a place from which hydrogen bombs or missiles could be launched. This view, apart from the effect it might have on the political situation in the island, would be another example of the tendency, previously noticed, to deal with the location of NATO H-bomb bases piecemeal and according to momentary convenience. There is also a garrison in Hong Kong larger than is necessary, if we assume no threat to the Colony, and at the same time incapable of defeating any serious assault.

There is the further commitment, to maintain four divisions in Europe, which cannot be abandoned except as part of a revision of NATO policy. That policy is based on the assumption that the West cannot match the East in manpower, and must therefore employ, for the defence of Europe, what the Defence Statement calls 'the full weight of nuclear power.' If this meant that Europe could be defeated by conventional forces supplemented only by the use of atomic weapons against tactical targets, then the present building-up of divisions in Europe would be a reasonable policy. The phrase 'full weight of nuclear power,' however, can hardly bear so limited a meaning; and if the West commences the tactical use of atomic weapons there can be no certainty that the enemy will exercise a similar restraint. If the conflict once shifted to the plane of full nuclear warfare, what would be the relevance of the present NATO divisions or

¹ C.M.D. 9396. H.M.S.O.

the reserve divisions which Britain is supposed subsequently to provide? Our policy seems again to be entangled in a web of inconsistent assumptions.

A Strategic Reserve

Yet another demand is made on the Army by the decision to build up on a strategic reserve in this country. That decision is sound enough in itself, since such a reserve is a valuable part of cold war strategy: what is doubtful is whether, in view of the other commitments, it can be carried into effect. There is a school of thought which maintains that economies of money and manpower can be secured by simpler administration and by the organisation of the Army into smaller formations capable of independent action. The defence statement rejects this view and, again, this rejection would be more convincing if it were accompanied by some alternative proposals for reducing the strain on Britain's manpower. Finally, there is the assumption that the Army can take on Civil Defence duties without reducing its obligations in other directions.

What the circumstances of the time seem to require is a concentration on the strategic reserve, an abandonment of the Cyprus project, a stringent re-assessment of the proper size of overseas garrisons, a further search for administrative economies, and a complete revision of the NATO plans for the defence of Europe. These steps might enable Britain to fulfil her responsibilities with a smaller number of men in the Army, but those men more highly trained. They would need to be trained not only in the use of both conventional and atomic weapons, but in Civil Defence duties and in the semi-political tasks that an emergency might impose upon them.

Recruitment and National Service

Mention of a smaller and more highly trained Army inevitably suggests an Army based more on regular soldiers and less on National Service men—and an Army in which a high proportion of regulars continue to serve for a long period. This is the ideal which has attracted and eluded all Governments since the end of the war. Despite improvements in pay, the proportion of the population willing to adopt the profession of regular soldier remains obstinately inelastic. It may be that Army routine is still so time-wasting and so full of unnecessary restrictions that it repels ambitions and self-respecting young men, and that this outweighs the improvements in pay and conditions which have undoubtedly occurred. It may also be that these improvements are not widely enough known and that the Army, in conjunction with education authorities and those responsible for youth employment, should present more effectively that which it has to offer. These, at least, are matters which should be examined if we are to come within reach of the smaller, more expert Army which the situation requires.

The Royal Air Force

If the Army is the main instrument of the Cold War, the Air Force is the main instrument of the hydrogen deterrent: the revolution in war-

fare, which requires the other services to be reduced, demands an increase in air power. There is, however, one substantial question, that of the relevance of fighter defences, in view of the impossibility of preventing a determined enemy from making an effective hydrogen attack on this country. In the heat of political controversy over the Government's claim to have provided this country with the most efficient night defence in the world, there is danger of losing sight of the larger question: even if this claim is true, does it make the least difference?

Needed: A Re-allocation of Resources

In each service there has been an attempt to provide not only the essentials of hydrogen deterrence and Cold War preparedness, but further defences against the unlikely contingency of major conventional war. The result is likely to be a nation equipped like the White Knight, whose horse wore, *inter alia*, anklets to guard against the bites of such sharks as it might encounter if it went into the water. A re-allocation of defence resources is required, and although this is unlikely to mean any significant reduction, if any at all, in total defence expenditure, it must mean reduction in certain fields. Against each of these proposed reductions a wealth of *expertise* can be, and no doubt has been, advanced. We must accept that some of this expert argument is valid: what we cannot accept is that at every point, the defenders of conventional preparations must have their way. Yet this is exactly what occurs in the defence statement. On every issue, from the maintenance of aircraft carriers to the rejection of administrative economies in the Army, that decision is reached which involves greater expense, closer adherence to convention, and more tender regard for existing professional interests in the three services.

It is, indeed, the existence of the three services in their present separation, with the desire of each to maintain its own prestige, which is the major obstacle. Much expert evidence must no doubt be considered before deciding such a question as the importance of the submarine menace in a possible future war, or the best method of combating it: but the present arrangement ensures that on every such question there are three powerful organisations seeking, not so much the right answer, as the answer most consonant with their own habits and prestige.

The Service Ministers

As a first step, would it not be advantageous to complete the subordination of the Service Minister to the Minister of Defence which is already implied in the fact that he sits in the Cabinet while they (although two of them enjoy the prestige of Secretaries of State and the third still trails the clouds of glory which once surrounded the office of Lord High Admiral) do not? The Minister of Defence could have, as his immediate second-in-command, a Minister of State and, subordinate to these, there could be Ministers with status between that of a Minister of State and a Parliamentary Secretary, for the three services. This would at once put the matter in its proper perspective and consequential changes would occur in the organisa-

tion of the Service Ministries. A further, somewhat specialised advantage would accrue. Co-ordination in defence has two distinct aspects. There is the framing of high policy, which is the responsibility of the Minister of Defence, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, and finally of the Cabinet itself. There is also the pursuit of common policy and action in lesser matters—organisation of recruiting, education services, relations with the Treasury, etc.—which at present is neglected. The Minister of Defence has not the time for such things: his Parliamentary Secretary has no authority over the Service Ministers; the Services themselves are concerned to maintain their own habits. A Minister of State, under the Minister of Defence, could give these matters the attention they require.

Reconciliation—or Destruction ?

It is a long journey in thought from the terrors of the hydrogen bomb to the intricacies of Whitehall, but throughout our consideration of foreign policy and defence we have to keep both the lesser and the greater issues in mind. It is a fallacy to suppose that the magnitude of the hydrogen revolution makes the details of defence organisation insignificant: for the more thorough and appropriate our planning of defence, the greater our chance of averting hydrogen war. In an examination of defence, one is obliged to refer repeatedly to possibilities of destruction, the horror of which beggars description: there is the constant danger that familiarity will blunt the senses and that one will begin to assume that preparation for suicide is the inevitable destiny of mankind. It is as well, therefore, to conclude by recalling that, side by side with preparations for defence, we must pursue, in foreign and imperial policy, the task of pacification. Defence, indeed, is only relevant in so far as it gives us time to seek for peace; for if that search fails, our defences will be useless. It was said at the outset that this is both an atomic age and an age of ferment. Because of these two facts, it will become, for mankind, either the Age of Reconciliation or the Age of Destruction. There is no third choice.

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