

**NATO
OR
NEUTRALITY**

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THE DEFENCE DEBATE

M.E.E.

NATO OR NEUTRALITY is the second publication of the Young Fabian Group, and has been prepared by a study group working on defence and foreign policy. It is intended as a contribution to the debate on defence, and states the case for neutrality. The argument that Britain should remain in the Western Alliance was presented in an earlier Fabian pamphlet, published in December, *The Pursuit of Peace*, by John Strachey. NATO OR NEUTRALITY does not necessarily represent the views of all members of the Young Fabian Group.

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I. Introduction

FOR the past 15 years Britain's alignment with the United States has been virtually unquestioned. Not only has no alternative been seriously suggested, but it has rarely been necessary even to justify the alliance. 'The unity of the West' has, in fact, been a sort of magical incantation, the permanent premise of political argument rather than a particular standpoint.

The A.E.U.'s Scarborough resolution, therefore, marks a real watershed in British post-war politics. It clearly and unequivocally demands: 'the unilateral renunciation of the testing, manufacture, stockpiling and basing of all nuclear weapons in Great Britain'.

The carrying of this resolution means that a substantial body of organised political opinion in this country now challenges the Anglo-American Alliance at its pivotal point: the existence of U.S. bases in Britain. The debate in the Party began as a defence debate: it is now far more. It is a foreign policy debate that involves not only questions of national security, vital and essential though these are. It involves questions of political analysis of the world scene and Britain's place in it. It involves, above all, a debate on how this country can so conduct its affairs as to have the maximum effect in helping to maintain the very existence of human life on this planet.

NATO or Neutrality? Thus may the issue be summed up. It is worth noticing here that this issue is not unique to the Labour Party and to Britain. Country after country in the past decade has already faced up to this question, and many more will do so in the immediate future. To participate in the cold war on one side or the other, or to remain neutral? In Cambodia, Egypt, Finland, Poland, India, Cuba, Hungary, Denmark, Iceland and Italy, to mention only a few, the question of neutrality or alignment has played an important role on the political scene. Not that the issue has always been raised in the same way, or even debated so openly as in Britain. In different circumstances the question has arisen and been resolved—where it has been resolved—in a different manner. But it is interesting to notice that in the majority of cases it is the existence of foreign bases or troops, and the consequent dangers of involvement in war that, as here, has aroused people to consciousness of the issue. So we are not alone in having to decide. Those commentators who see the debate merely as an internal trouble of the Labour Party are guilty of the worst form of parochialism. The argument inside the Party is merely a prelude to the argument that ultimately must be faced by the British people as other peoples throughout the world are facing it. Indeed, the fact that neutralism has come on to the British political scene via the Labour Party is one of the most heartening signs of the Party's basic health and awareness of the trends of political development in the world as a whole.

This pamphlet sets out to examine the alternative paths for Britain.

It ranges widely. Too widely, some may say. But the greatest issue in British politics today cannot be discussed solely in the technical jargon of modern defence. Nor can it be discussed in generalities about the immorality or otherwise of nuclear weapons and the use thereof. It is a debate on the principles and aims of foreign policy, rather than the technicalities of defence.

The Basis of the Anglo-American Alliance

The establishment of NATO in 1949 was the formalisation and military expression of a political coalition that had been gradually built up since about the summer of 1946. It is worth looking back at the world balance of power in the 'forties to understand the why and wherefore of NATO.

The decade of the 'forties saw the eclipse of Western Europe. For some 400 years the history of the world had been for all practical purposes the history of Western Europe—its expansion, its science, its industrial revolution, the spreading of its cultural values. Two European wars within thirty years ended that. The successor states to West European dominance were clearly the U.S.A. and Russia, and even before the German surrender it was apparent that post-war politics would be dominated by the struggle for supremacy between these two. There were many in Europe, including Britain, who would like to have stayed out of the struggle. This 'third force' idea was much in evidence from Labour platforms at the time of the 1945 election. On the Continent, there was even some feeling that if a choice had to be made, Russia would be preferable to America. Yet, within a few years, practically every Western European country was firmly and securely in the American-led coalition. Why?

One reason was reaction against Russia's military presence in Eastern Europe. The establishment of virtually satellite regimes under the wing of Soviet troops in Poland and the Balkans, the Communist take-over in Czechoslovakia and the siege of West Berlin aroused genuine fear and disquiet in the West. This accentuated the swing to the Right in Western Europe and increased the already strong tendency to rely on American support.

The greatest problem facing the whole of Europe was reconstruction after the ravages of war. Russia was economically too weak to help, and indeed needed reconstruction herself. Consequently, America was the only conceivable source of aid. And the fact that Western Europe was reconstructed with American money meant capitalist reconstruction and the consequent dominance of pro-American values and parties. By 1947 Communist ministers had been eased out of the various broad coalition governments that had held office in several Continental countries immediately after the war.

But there was one further factor of immense importance. The countries of Western Europe, including Britain, still had large interests overseas, in Asia and Africa. Nationalist movements, particularly in Asia, were arising to contest European supremacy. Communism appeared as the natural ally of the nationalists, and in some places, such as Indo-China, even controlled the nationalist revolution. The European powers needed American support

to prevent Soviet diplomatic or other intervention which would have strengthened the nationalists and made them more intransigent. Without America's power in the background to encourage the 'moderate' nationalists in places like Burma or Indonesia, the Communists might well have been greater beneficiaries of the transfer of power.

Britain's Role

In the build up of the Alliance Britain played a unique part. She was the only major West European country not to have suffered defeat in war. Her political influence was nominally wider than ever before—in the Middle East, for instance, it now included not only the traditional areas, but Syria, Ethiopia, Libya and Greece as well. Yet her resources were pitifully overstrained and she was unable to meet her commitments. The only conceivable means of doing so was with American help. And so in the Far East, in Persia, in Greece and Turkey, in the Mediterranean, 'British supremacy' gave way to Anglo-American supremacy—or out-and-out American control. This was effective because America was militarily the strongest power in the world—strong because of her monopoly of the atomic bomb and her immense economic resources. America's strength enabled Britain to reconstruct at home and to adjust her imperial commitments with the minimum of revolutionary effect in each case. Without American aid the Labour Government would have had to take far more stringent measures at home, and without general American strategic support Britain would have been unable to defeat the Communist-inclined revolutionary movements in places like Malaya and Greece, and pave the way for moderate governments.

This link between Britain's imperial commitments and the American alliance is of the greatest significance. Many statesmen realised the importance of the American connection to the maintenance of some sort of Empire overseas. Some naively thought the old order could go on as before—an Empire supported by American arms and financed by American money, but ruled by British brains. Mr. Macmillan expressed this view neatly and succinctly in 1943: 'We are the Greeks in this American Empire'.

The period of the formation of the great coalition in the immediate post-war years coincided with an American expansion parallel to the nineteenth century expansion of Europe. The war had stimulated in the United States the greatest industrial machine in the world's history. The changeover from war to peace production meant immense amounts of goods and capital for export. American aid helped to make Europe and its dependencies a ready market for both. And with American aid and capital came a plethora of advisers, financiers, economic agencies and missions—a veritable 'Présence Americaine'.

Thus the Anglo-American alliance, and the broader coalition of which it was the lynch-pin, was more than a simple military alliance of two countries against a third. It was a coming together of political, economic and strategic interests deeply rooted in the history and social systems of the countries concerned.

2. A Changed world

WE have examined the formation of the Anglo-American Alliance and NATO against the background of world conditions in the late 'forties. Now we must try to assess how far these conditions still exist. It is difficult to see the broad developments of contemporary history—we are living too close to too many specific political issues. But looking back over the 'fifties, it is surely clear that that decade produced greater shifts in the balance of power than any other comparable peacetime period. Let us interpret the term 'fifties generously, and take as our two dates for comparison the signing of NATO in April, 1949, and the present (Spring 1961). It is worth tabulating the significant changes in the world balance of power.

* The American nuclear monopoly has gone. The two great powers now have more or less nuclear parity. At the same time technology has advanced by leaps and bounds, ensuring that a full-scale nuclear war would mean the end of civilisation.

* The United States has lost its vast technological superiority over Russia. This has been graphically illustrated by Soviet space achievements. And although United States production is still higher than Russian, the Soviet economic system is capable of more purposeful direction and does not suffer from repeated recessions.

* A large group of neutral nations has emerged, with its own ideas on political priorities. The cold war has thus ceased to have the overwhelming importance in world politics that it had a decade ago.

* Britain no longer exercises political and military control over a vast colonial Empire, although as a nation dependent on trade, British economic interests are far-flung.

* Western Europe is much stronger economically and therefore has the potentiality of an alignment in the world independent of the U.S.

* To a lesser extent a similar development has taken place in Eastern Europe.

Some of the implications of these changes must be examined a little further.

The first is that the value of the American alliance to Britain has decreased and the danger of belonging to it has increased. For all alliances carry for their participants an element of value and an element of danger. The smaller your interests to be protected, the less chance that someone else will fight on your behalf and the greater the danger that you will be dragged into someone else's conflict. Sir Anthony Eden recognised this when he said to Dulles at the time of Suez:

'Abrogation (of empire) means neutrality.'

In other words, if Britain reached the stage where she had no imperial interests and commitments to defend, the American alliance would be of

much less value to her. It is this stage that Britain is now reaching. Our relationship with the new forces in the world must be radically adjusted, for as a nation absolutely dependent on trade our foreign policy needs to be particularly sensitive to world political changes. To a certain extent, of course, such adjustment is already taking place, as witness the evolving Commonwealth.

As long as world changes were taking place within the general framework of the western alliance, then the adjustments to British foreign policy could take place within that framework too. Britain's security and place in the world would continue to be assured by being a leading member of the world's most powerful grouping.

Decline of the West

But the significance of the changes we have noted is that they have affected the political position of the bloc as a whole. Militarily, the cold war is a stalemate. Soviet and American nuclear potential are fairly evenly balanced. Both powers have the capability to destroy the other and the rest of the world several times over. A military impasse, yes. But on the political and economic fronts the cold war is far from a stalemate. All the changes we have noticed above mark a general steady tendency: the erosion of the formerly dominant position in the world of the American bloc. Thus Britain finds herself a member of an alliance no longer enjoying almost unchallenged hegemony over three-quarters of the globe, but becoming increasingly a minority of the peoples of the world. There is an interesting indicator whereby this relative weakening is almost arithmetically tabulated: votes at the United Nations. Look at the usual figures in the 1946-1950 period in the General Assembly. The U.S. could rely on a huge, almost automatic, majority of something like 53—5. Now this majority has crumbled. On occasions the West has been in a minority and it is doubtful if the Americans will ever again secure a majority against Chinese admission.

Together with these changes in economic and political power has come another, subtler change, even less easy to tabulate, but none the less of immense significance; the loss by the West of its moral and ideological position. In the 'forties, with Europe the main area of dispute between the power blocs, it could well be argued that the cold war was in fact a struggle between liberal democracy and Communist dictatorship. If one was prepared to take an optimistic view of the rapidity and peacefulness of the evolution of independence in the colonies, the West in the late 'forties easily had the moral edge. But now? No longer is it possible to say that liberal democracy is the main distinguishing feature of the West. In Asia it is the military dictatorships of Formosa, South Vietnam, Thailand and Pakistan that are the main allies of the West, whilst Asian liberal democracies like India, Burma and Ceylon shun western alliances. In Africa the most consistent supporters of the West at the United Nations have been the absolute monarchy of Ethiopia and racialist South Africa. Although the British Government's attitude to apartheid at the United Nations is at

long last undergoing a welcome change, since Verwoerd's withdrawal from the Commonwealth, there are no signs that South Africa's position in western strategy will be altered. In NATO itself, there is fascist Portugal and the military authoritarian régime of Turkey. And although not formally a NATO member, Franco Spain with its American air and missile bases, is an integral part of Western Defence. The only common factor linking the countries of the West is acceptance in one form or another of the private ownership of economic resources; that is to say, capitalism. The weaknesses of the West we have noticed above are very largely the weaknesses of capitalism; the unplanned and wasteful use of economic resources, and everything that is summed up in the word 'imperialism'. It is the latter in particular that has been the main factor making for the West's political setbacks in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The fact that the interests of the capitalist powers are so intimately bound up with the American alliance does not mean that socialists should reject it out of hand. Even Communist states have found it to their interest to ally with capitalist countries from time to time. But it does mean that the Labour Party must take a new and critical look at the alliance and its implications for the future of Britain.

The Moral Issue

Meanwhile, the Communist world has progressed some way along the path of greater freedom and tolerance. Not all that far, perhaps, with the memory of Hungary still in our minds, but the Eastern Europe of 1961 is a different, more prosperous and happier place than it was in 1949. In the sphere of major policies, the moral balance has tilted more against the West. As against Budapest, there is Port Said and now Cuba; as against Tibet there is Algeria and Angola. Imre Nagy has been murdered—and so has Patrice Lumumba. If there has been a 'Jewish doctors' plot', there has been a Sen. McCarthy. Despite their ideological claims there appears in practice little to choose between the political conduct of the two sides. Are moral and ideological assessments of this nature relevant to a discussion on foreign and defence policy? Undoubtedly yes, for if one feels that the eventual victory of one's own side is vital for the future of mankind, one is presumably prepared to go quite a way in risking a war, even of total annihilation, for the defence of that side. If, on the other hand, the choice is between two rival power blocs almost equally distasteful, such a risk is less compelling.

To sum up, therefore, we are facing a situation in which the West, whilst it has nuclear parity with the East, is, compared with ten years ago, relatively weaker in all other spheres: economic, political, ideological. The common denominator of the West is not so much parliamentary democracy or liberalism, but the social-economic system of capitalism, and it is the rejection of western-dominated capitalism by increasing numbers of the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America that is contributing to the economic and political weakening of the West.

3. The Strategy of Nato

WE have seen how the world political scene has changed since the formation of NATO; it is now necessary to take a look at how this changing political background has brought about changes in the strategy of the West.

The military planners of 1949 were obsessed with the idea of a conventional war in Europe. With Stalin's Balkan policy and the Berlin crisis in mind, an attempt by Russia to occupy Western Europe was thought to be a strong probability. NATO strategy in Europe, accordingly, was to build a combined army strong enough to hold up a possible advance of the Soviet army until the Americans could turn Russia into a nuclear dust bowl. Indeed, some Western Governments believed it possible to build up such a strong military establishment—nuclear and conventional—that it would be possible to force territorial concessions from the Russians. As late as the 1955 summit, the West put forward, presumably seriously, plans for a German settlement that would in effect have meant unconditional Russian withdrawal from East Germany without any corresponding concession by the West.

A Soviet Attack ?

But the west could only conceivably have enforced a 'diktat' in Central Europe if it could have kept its nuclear monopoly and large conventional forces as well. Neither condition was satisfied. The course of events forces us to question whether in fact the western powers have seriously believed their official propaganda about the likelihood of a Soviet attack. Thus France has continually committed the cream of her army, not to her presumed threatened eastern frontier, but overseas, first to Indo-China, then to Algeria. Britain, again, has progressively withdrawn troops from Europe for service in Cyprus, Kenya and the Persian Gulf. It is significant that the promise to maintain four divisions in Europe was squeezed out of a reluctant Britain not by a sudden crisis with Russia, but to reassure France about Germany. Again, in 1950, we were told NATO could only defend Europe properly if it included German troops. Yet ten years later the Germans are only just beginning to contribute to NATO in sizeable numbers.

Despite the lack of enthusiasm of individual members, NATO strategy continued to be based on the assumption that military occupation of Western Europe was a serious Soviet goal. This forced it to become more and more dependent on nuclear weapons during the 'fifties. At first, the West had a nuclear monopoly; through most of the 'fifties it had a lead over the Russians. It was clear that the West regarded nuclear weapons not merely as an answer ('deterrent' in current jargon) to Russian nuclear

weapons, but as an answer to much less clear situations that might arise, such as a dispute over access to Berlin.

This dependence on nuclear strategy has not diminished with Russia's achieving parity about two years ago. Indeed, it has increased. More and more over the past few years, what America has required from her allies have been nuclear bases. In Britain it has been a yearly process. In 1957 and 1958 fixed land-missile bases; in 1959 more manned bomber bases; in 1960 nuclear-armed submarine bases. Land, air and sea—the three elements of and around our island have become the repositories of a huge nuclear arsenal. Outside Europe any pretence or hope of a conventional forces' shield has long since been dropped; no one seriously believes that the Persian army can provide effective ground forces for CENTO, or the Thai for SEATO. These alliances have been unable even to set up joint commands. The 'teeth' behind CENTO and SEATO are American atomic weapons from carrier-based planes of the Sixth and Seventh Fleets respectively. Nuclear strategy is seen in all its nakedness and crudity.

We are left, then, in a position in which the current military structure of NATO demands the use of nuclear weapons, even in situations such as the oft-quoted East German rising supported by West German troops crossing the border. This is not merely tacitly admitted by field commanders who train their troops in the use of tactical atomic weapons to the exclusion of conventional arms, but openly stated by NATO military leaders, including General Norstad himself.

Limited War

A few years ago it was fashionable to argue the possibility of fighting a 'limited' nuclear war, in which tactical but not strategic weapons would be used on either side and the field of battle would be confined, say, to Germany, without spreading further. Apart from the psychological device of labelling as 'tactical' a nuclear warhead, fired over a hundred miles and carrying a destructive power as great as that of the bombs which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this argument always seemed to belong more to a strategist's dreamland than actual military reality. Now, even the NATO apologists such as the American strategist Kissinger writing in the magazine *Daedalus* have quickly abandoned it, and accepted the inevitability of a localised nuclear conflict developing to a full-scale nuclear war. From this to talk of 'pre-emptive first strikes' (the phrase for preventive war in the nuclear age) is not a long jump, and one which at least some NATO military politicians seem to have made.

It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to dwell on the horrors of nuclear war. Few of those who read these words can be unaware of what such a war would mean. But it is necessary to follow to its bitter end the logic of this continually broadening role of nuclear strategy. It means that nuclear war could start, not only from a decision of either side to launch a nuclear 'Pearl Harbour'; it could start because of a confused political situation such as that prevailing in Laos. The American alert reached an advanced stage at least twice because of this crisis. Similar situations will

recur wherever the two power blocs touch; the one facing political setback or defeat will always be tempted to threaten war in a desperate attempt to hold its position. It is sobering to think of the number of countries on the periphery of the blocs, from East Germany to South Korea, where an internal political upheaval could have the effect of another Sarajevo.

To this must be added the ever-present danger of war by pure mistake. There are indications that Soviet deterrent forces are sometimes subject to alarms, particularly in East Germany, though full information is not available. We do, however, know that the American Supreme Air Command admitted that in the autumn of 1960 the U.S. nuclear base network was alerted, because the radar at Thule in Greenland picked up what could have been dozens of bombers coming from the direction of Siberia. Great praise was given to the Canadian General who realised that the object in question was the moon, which happens to rise in the East. But suppose it had been a less intelligent General on duty that night?

Control of Nuclear Weapons

The dependence on nuclear strategy has one further consequence we must consider. It is of the essence of nuclear weapons that their use must be credible—that is, the other side must believe that they will be used in certain circumstances. Now this need for credibility makes multinational control of nuclear weapons virtually impossible. For consultation between sixteen governments would mean considerable delay—and perhaps even then not arriving at a decision. The mere possibility of such doubt and delay would destroy the ‘credibility’ of nuclear weapons. Hence there must be something considerably less than alliance control.

This indeed is the logic which forced Mr. Macmillan, in the storm that broke in the House of Commons over the decision to allow the Americans a Polaris base in Holy Loch, to give up any pretence that his government would be able to control the circumstances under which the Polaris would or would not be fired. When Polaris is used it will be used swiftly and, whether or not there is time to contact the American President for his approval, there is hardly likely to be sufficient to consult Mr. Macmillan, General de Gaulle, Dr. Adenauer and the rest of the NATO allies. ‘One finger on the trigger, fifteen on the safety catch’ is hardly a credible arrangement.

Now the simple facts of power political relationships ensure that when an alliance is based on nuclear strategy and one member of that alliance has a monopoly of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, that member becomes the virtual dictator of alliance policy. This fact has been recognised by Mr. Macmillan, General de Gaulle, Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Strachey. Thus Mr. Strachey, arguing against allowing the Americans to keep a nuclear monopoly in the West, wrote:

‘It would undoubtedly tend to make us more completely dependent on America. It would decrease Britain’s influence for peace and security in the world. It would make the task of Labour’s Foreign Secretary that much more difficult for there would always be the

feeling of utter dependence upon an ally which alone had the decisive weapons. We must ask again whether such complete dependence upon America really is a position which we would desire for a Labour Government.'

(‘Scrap All the H-bombs,’ p. 19.)

This statement is as true today as when it was written nearly three years ago, and it is as true for every member of NATO as it is for Britain. That is the frightening dilemma faced by each and every member of NATO: to accept American control and direction of the alliance or to embark on a national nuclear weapons programme at crippling economic cost, and with all the horrors of a multiplicity of nuclear armed states. Britain and France have both tried to choose the path of national bombs, but Britain has had the Blue Streak missile fiasco, and may soon find herself with nuclear weapons but no independent means of using them on anybody. De Gaulle's bombs have so far only helped to enrage anti-French feeling in Africa and to blow the French community to pieces somewhat more quickly than might otherwise have happened. The path of national glory by mushroom cloud is not a rosy one, but it is a path which more and more states may feel compelled to take, given the continuance of the blocs and the inevitable national status anxieties inside each of them.

Nuclear strategy has not only rendered political control of weapons impossible, it has impinged upon political control of politics. More and more nowadays foreign policy is coming to be dominated by the requirements of defence policy. Thus the U.S. and Federal Germany have constantly opposed the various disengagement proposals put forward in the past few years. These schemes, involving the phased withdrawal of foreign forces from the East-West frontier in Europe, formed the basis of the Rapacki plan and of similar plans put forward by Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Kennan, former U.S. Ambassador in Moscow. It is easy to see the logic of American and West German opposition. The extension of nuclear weapons ‘downwards’ to troops at tactical or local level puts a premium on placing them as far east in Europe as possible. It also puts a premium on West Germany as an ally, as for geographical reasons nuclear weapons intended for ‘local’ use must be situated on her territory. Increasingly, West German troops are going to constitute the hard core of NATO forces in this forward area, and the cry will inevitably go up that in the interests of fair play, national equality, etc., these German troops who are in NATO'S front line should be equipped with the most up-to-date, i.e. nuclear, weapons available. The very built-in logic of NATO strategy, therefore, leads to West Germany playing an increasingly important part militarily and politically.

Keeping the Peace

Granted that the present structure of NATO is fraught with danger, and that it appears to encourage the passage of effective power to take decisions from governments to a military élite, it may yet be argued that it works; after all, it has preserved the peace for the last decade, and to

tamper might prove dangerous. But does it in fact work? It is irrelevant for preservation of peace in areas where war really threatens. In Laos, some members of SEATO, NATO's brother organisation, far from keeping the peace, actively sought to extend the war.

In the Congo, where the vital interests of a number of NATO members have been involved, it has been the U.N. and not NATO which has acted to help keep the peace. Whether or not the U.N. will be proved successful in its intervention, at least it has tried. NATO, on the other hand, has not only been completely powerless to act itself, but has transmitted its powerlessness to its individual members. Canadian troops, who in other circumstances could have been a godsend in the Congo today, were precluded from going because of Canada's membership of NATO.

Algeria is an even more interesting case. For here is the only large-scale war in the world today—actually being waged on NATO territory. Surely this magnificent collective security system could have done something here? Yet for over six years, NATO has been powerless. It is the annual struggle in the U.N. which, autumn by painful autumn, has helped to bring France at long last to the door of the negotiating room.

The nature of NATO and of its counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, whose forces suppressed the Hungarian revolution, must therefore be clearly understood. They are not collective security systems at all, still less forms of an embryo world government, but power blocs waging a bitter cold war with highly dangerous nuclear strategies.

Can the Alliance be Altered?

What then is Britain to do? There are many who say 'stay in NATO and change it'. The joint Labour Party—TUC Statement 'Policy for Peace' of February, 1961, after admitting that NATO strategy is perilously dependent on nuclear weapons, continues:

'Britain should press urgently for the following objectives:

- * To make it possible for NATO to halt a local conflict with conventional weapons alone.*
- * To stop the spread of nuclear weapons to individual countries inside the alliance.*
- * To establish satisfactory collective political control of Western nuclear weapons and military strategy'.*

Now this seems an attractive approach and it would be a real step forward if the logic of the argument was accepted, and British membership of NATO made conditional upon the achievement of the objectives contained therein. But is there any chance that these changes could be brought about? We have seen how the whole trend has been the other way for very compelling reasons. What could Britain do to make these reasons less compelling? Should she rely just upon the clarity and logic of her statesmen in the Council Chamber pointing out the dangers of nuclear

strategy? What is she going to suggest as an alternative? Mr. Watkinson's New Model Army of 160,000 men? Or is she going to reach the depths of absurdity and break her back economically to produce British missiles so that NATO will listen more attentively when she says, 'The alliance must reduce its dependence on missiles?'

Alternatively, it has been argued, the West German army will before long be at full strength; the consequent increase in conventional forces will then enable us to 'denuclearise'. But this would accentuate still further that very predominance of Germany in NATO, the avoidance of which is so often cited as a reason for continued membership of the alliance.

Britain's Influence

The 'persuade NATO' argument ignores not only the reduced British influence arising directly from the nuclear situation, but also the increasingly subordinate position of Britain vis-a-vis the United States arising from other factors. In 1949 the Anglo-American alliance was still an alliance of two world powers—a stronger and a weaker, admittedly, but still two international powers mutually reinforcing each other at different points. If the United States was supreme in the Far East, then Britain still controlled the Middle East. But the theory of mutual reinforcement has simply not worked. In the Far East Britain has subjected her interests to the requirements of United States policy and strategy: supporting her in Korea, joining with her in setting up SEATO, and not following up the recognition of China to the best possible advantage. What a different story in the Middle East, Britain's former sphere of influence! In Persia, in Egypt, in the Arabian peninsula, in Jordan, the Americans have worked not to reinforce British interests, but to replace them. Persia is a noticeable case in point. British Petroleum's assets were taken over by a nationalist Government in 1951; by 1954 Anglo-American diplomacy had secured a pro-western military coup, but British Petroleum got only 40 per cent. of its holding back. American companies shared most of the remainder between them.

Other European countries have had similar experiences; France over Indo-China and parts of North Africa; the Belgians over Congo. In these cases, American 'anti-colonialism', however genuinely felt by individual liberal Americans, has enabled the U.S. to ease out the European country, and to take its place not as a direct colonial power, but as the dominant partner in a relationship not dissimilar to that enjoyed by the United States with Latin America. Russia has sometimes been able also to establish this sort of relationship with an ex-colonial country, such as North Vietnam. But America's links with the European powers enable her to begin to establish her position before the handing over of power to the new rulers, as for example in parts of East Africa today. Those in this country who have opposed British colonialism have done so to help genuinely independent nations emerge, not to make Africa a second Latin America or Eastern Europe.

In some cases there has not been real consultation even between American Government departments, let alone with allies. The U.2 spy flight and now the indirect aggression against Cuba are two such examples. President Kennedy's shameful attempt—which may be repeated—to instal a puppet government in Cuba by force is just the sort of exercise in brinkmanship that could lead to a general war. Britain and Western Europe, as part of America's front line, would be dragged into disaster not for any great or basic issue affecting their own destiny, but for the noble cause of trying to make Cuba once again a country fit for the United Fruit Company to operate in.

The Anglo-American alliance is thus less and less a global partnership, and increasingly the sort of semi-satellite relationship that Britain in former years imposed upon smaller powers. Macmillan and others may cling to their 'Greeks in the American Empire' theory of Anglo-U.S. relations, but we proved unable even to persuade the Americans to back us in the Middle East, a special British sphere of influence, five years ago. Does anyone seriously think that the United States will suddenly put its world military-nuclear strategy in reverse at the behest of Britain? Some welcome modifications of that strategy are being introduced, but the basic reliance on nuclear weapons remains. President Kennedy has even called for the acceleration of the United States missile programme. During the war Americans used to talk jokingly of Churchill as the man with the big ideas and the small battalions. Now the cards are even more decisively stacked against us: the passing of the leaders between whom personal relations were built up through Anglo-American wartime co-operation, a disappearing Empire, a creaking economy, waning political power in Asia and Africa, and not even a whiff of the sputnik or a missile in the air. Let us no longer confuse a place at the High Table with the exercise of power.

What can Britain do ?

It is worth summing up the analysis to date. In 1949 Britain's security was guaranteed by membership of a powerful and invincible group of nations in which she played a not unimportant role. Today, not only is her own position in the bloc greatly weakened, but the bloc itself now represents only a minority of the world's peoples and is increasingly relying on nuclear weapons and strategy to maintain its position. Whilst outright war has so far been avoided, a relentless struggle in nearly every form of human endeavour is being waged between the two blocs—a struggle which always contains the potential danger that it will at some time or another give place to all-out nuclear war.

Yet there is another side to this dark picture. More and more peoples and governments throughout the world are rejecting the cold war as a permanent feature of the international scene. They are basing their security not on the military power of one side or another but on a policy of positive neutrality, that is, a policy which not only refuses to take sides but aims to relegate the cold war from its dominating position in world politics.

The time is now ripe for a thorough reassessment of British foreign policy along these lines.

Such a reassessment must take place against the background of a nuclear balance of terror between the USA and Russia. Opponents of the Scarborough policy often accuse its supporters of wanting unilaterally to disarm the whole western alliance. This is complete nonsense. It is a criticism made by those who can only conceive of foreign policy in terms of 'persuading America'. By its unequivocal call for the renunciation of the basing of nuclear weapons in Britain, the Scarborough policy points the way to a clear alternative to the dangers and frustrations arising from Britain's position in the American alliance: the alternative of a foreign policy of positive neutrality. It would not be possible, of course, for Britain to disentangle herself from her alliances and to adopt new policies overnight. What must be envisaged is that a British government elected on the basis of a neutralist foreign policy should immediately begin negotiations with the Americans for the closing of bases on our territory. The actual process of negotiations and withdrawal may take anything up to three years. Morocco has recently negotiated such a withdrawal; it is taking about two and a half years and Morocco should be free of American bases by 1963. The withdrawal of Soviet bases from Finland also took about two years. Such a period gives the withdrawing power time to adjust its own national security requirements. The next step is to negotiate a withdrawal from NATO. This is a natural and logical consequence of the withdrawal of America's bases; it is also an essential step towards a policy of positive neutrality and the ending of the division of Europe into NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. The policy of the future neutral Britain need not wait until the departure of the last American missile—it can and should begin to develop at once. In fact, it is absolutely vital that it should do so, for the security of the world requires that the neutralist powers be reinforced and supported as soon as possible.

It is now necessary to examine the role of these neutralist powers in world politics and indicate the sort of policies a neutral Britain could follow to help keep the peace.

4. How Neutrality Works

IT is often suggested that neutrality is equivalent to isolation and an abrogation of responsibility in foreign affairs. This is far from being the case. A clear distinction must be made between 'neutralisation' on the Swiss pattern and the positive neutrality that has become such a feature of the world political scene in the past five years. Neutralisation certainly means a conscious contracting out of world politics. Switzerland, for example, has always considered membership of the U.N. as incompatible with her neutralisation. Positive neutrality, on the other hand, has meant a very active involvement in world affairs. The foreign policies of countries like India, U.A.R. and Ghana are clear examples of this. Sweden, with her important roles in the Middle East and Congo U.N. Commands, has had a far more important influence than European countries of similar size in one or other of the two blocs.

The Swiss form of neutralisation would be quite out of the question for Britain for a variety of reasons connected with her size, her economic position, her traditions and so on. Nor has it ever been seriously suggested. The spirit of Aldermaston and of Scarborough has been based on a desire to ease the world situation, to participate more actively and constructively in world affairs rather than to contract out. It is precisely the spirit which has inspired and directed the policy of most of the neutralist states.

Positive neutrality has until recently been mainly regional: that is to say, neutral countries have aimed at keeping their own parts of the world outside the cockpit of the cold war. It is worth while referring briefly in this context to four parts of the world: Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Scandinavia.

Asia

A decade ago Asia was torn with cold war struggles. In Korea and Indo-China open war had broken out between the two power blocs. Elsewhere in Asia the internal stability of countries like Burma, Malaya and Indonesia was threatened by strains resulting from the cold war. But from the mid-fifties India, Indonesia and Burma, by following a firm course of neutrality, have been able to play a major role in preventing the periodic crises degenerating into open war. There have recently been serious crises in Laos, with America and Russia each supporting one side in the civil war. Yet the two neutralist countries of India and Cambodia have been able to play an important role in reducing the tension and limiting the crises. Again, there has been the question of China's frontiers. The Chinese have negotiated and signed treaties with Nepal, Burma and Afghanistan, which appear likely to represent a stable settlement. Talks

are still continuing with India. Can anyone doubt that these problems would have been far more serious if China's neighbours had not been neutralist but had had American bases on their soil? Or that Sino-Japanese relations would improve immeasurably if the Japanese Socialist Party's policy of positive neutrality was adopted?

The Middle East

Now let us look at the Middle East. Here the relevant periods for comparison are 1955-1958 and 1958 onwards. In the former period there were Suez, the Eisenhower and Shepilov doctrines, the Syrian-Turkish dispute, the Anglo-American landing in Jordan and Lebanon, all of which were related to the cold war and could have triggered off a world war. In the latter period most of the main countries of the area have emerged as neutrals, and Turkey, the most powerful country still 'committed', has tended to withdraw from active Middle East politics and concentrate its energies on compelling domestic problems. The Egyptian-Iraq dispute before 1958 was a cold war affair, with the West backing Nuri and Russia Nasser. But since then both the U.A.R. and Iraq have followed firmly neutral foreign policies. Their quarrels have become a local affair, no longer a cold war issue. As a result, hostility between the two is now much less dangerous to the world at large.

Africa

Africa is still in the stage that the Far East was in ten years ago, and the Middle East five years ago: a cockpit for a power bloc struggle. This is seen in its most marked form in the Congo, with the East backing the Lumumbist authorities and the West the Kasavubu-Mobutu regime. But the cold war is in evidence all over the continent. In West Africa, Russia supports Sekou Toure against France's Houphouet Boigny or America's Tubman. In still dependent East Africa, one politician accepts an invitation to Washington, his rival to Peking. Yet out of this morass the pattern of the not so distant future is emerging: African neutrality. Already the foreign policy of Ghana is beginning to have a stabilising effect on great power politics in Africa. Congo has been bad enough, but how much worse if the forces of the rival powers themselves had become involved?

Scandinavia

In Europe, Sweden has not only stayed outside the rival power blocs herself, but has tried to keep the whole of Scandinavia outside. On several occasions she has attempted to form a Scandinavian alliance independent of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. She has only partially failed in this, for although Norway and Denmark have remained in NATO, they have refused to allow the Americans bases on their territory, whilst Finland has secured the removal of Soviet bases from hers. Thus Northern Europe has been kept free of great power physical presence. Swedish neutrality has played a similar role in securing this to that played by Indian neutrality

on a larger scale in keeping much of Asia free from the physical presence of the great powers.

So far the positive neutrality we have mentioned has been essentially regional in objective; Nehru has aimed to keep Asia free of power bloc influence, Nasser the same with the Middle East, Nkrumah with Africa, Sweden with Scandinavia.

Yet there has always been a world aspect to positive neutrality: Nehru has most often given utterance to this. It is a desire not only to free one area from the cold war, but to mitigate power bloc hostility on a global scale as well. Politically, the global element in positive neutrality came into its own at the U.N. General Assembly in the autumn of 1960. There the neutrals joined together to manifest their pressure on the great powers, not only on regional matters, but also on general world issues like disarmament. Nkrumah played a very important role in this by his speech to the General Assembly.

Both the great nuclear powers have recently shown some conciliatory trends in world policies—trends symbolised by the mood in the U.S. leading to the election of Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Khrushchev's defeat of the more adamant cold war enthusiasts in his own camp. The growing power and influence of the neutralist nations have played an extremely important part in these developments. Indeed, the attitudes of the two great powers have tended to grow more conciliatory almost in direct proportion to the growth of the influence of the neutral nations.

It is significant that the new men of the Kennedy era are attaching immense importance to the views and policies of the neutrals. The appointment of the liberal and powerful figure of Adlai Stevenson to the key post of representative at the U.N.—the neutralists' sounding board—is symptomatic of this new outlook. The Moscow declaration, for its part, makes great play with the important role of the neutrals in maintaining world peace. One of Khrushchev's main arguments against the Stalinists was clearly the need for the communist powers not to antagonise the neutrals—or 'states of national democracy' as the jargon goes. Neutralism, then, is a strong and influential force, although it is far from being a homogeneous one. What role could a neutral Britain play in this increasingly neutralist world?

Towards a Neutralist Europe

We have noticed the two main strands in the policies of neutral countries—regional and global. A neutralist Britain would develop her foreign policy similarly—that is to say, it would have both a particular European element and a general international aspect. Let us now look in some detail at what positive neutrality would mean for Britain and Europe.

The aim of British policy would be to work for the physical disengagement of the Great Powers from the whole of Europe, and to ensure British security in the context of a Europe unified on the basis of positive neutrality. We have seen how Sweden has been able to secure something approaching this for northern Europe—there is at least great power physical disengage-

ment from Scandinavia. Could Britain begin to do for Europe as a whole what Sweden has done for Northern Europe?

Four countries of Northern Europe—Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark—are all Britain's partners in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Two of this country's other partners in EFTA—Austria and Switzerland—are also neutrals. Thus the eight in EFTA, one of Britain's most important links with the Continent, four are out-and-out neutrals, and five of them either have Socialist Governments or coalitions containing socialists. In EFTA, therefore, there is a very important base from which the European policy of a neutral Britain could develop, for with nearly all its members having a similar neutralist policy, the Association would become of much greater political significance. The other member of EFTA, fascist Portugal, is a special case. Plans for integrating her lag some 10 or 12 years behind. She might well leave an otherwise entirely neutralist Association.

The very act of Britain's withdrawal from NATO would have immense repercussions in Europe. It would stimulate and provide a constructive direction for the neutralist and potentially neutralist forces elsewhere on the Continent. For let us be quite clear that the movement against American bases in Britain is no isolated phenomenon. It has taken the form it has—the Scarborough decision—because of the particular structure of British politics and the workings of the two party system. But there are innumerable other straws in the wind. There is the formation of a specifically neutralist party, a splinter from the S.P.D., in West Germany at the time that Bonn itself is gingerly sounding East European countries with a view to improved relations. In France the always latent anti-American tendencies of Gaullism have again begun to assert themselves on such issues as American fighters on French soil and American command of the French Mediterranean Fleet. Nor are the potential signs of neutralism all on one side. Yugoslavia has moved away from her reassociation with the Communist bloc and is increasingly asserting her neutrality. The Italian Socialist Party, led by Nenni, formerly pro-Soviet in the cold war, carried by a majority at its March, 1961, conference a resolution in favour of positive neutrality. Gomulka may well ease himself still further towards a neutralist foreign policy if a strong group of neutralist powers makes it possible, and might even be attracted to join an EFTA which was largely neutralist. Poland's economic links with Russia are hardly closer than those of Finland, which has recently become a member. An EFTA expanded to include some East European countries could be a real help in one of the most important tasks of a neutralist Britain—improved political and economic relations with Russia.

Britain would be able to put forward proposals to the other countries of Europe for the step by step achievement of political and economic unity of the Continent on the basis of neutrality—a sort of giant Rapacki-Gaitskell plan that would be an ultimate goal towards which Europe could strive, rather than a scheme imposed by Soviet-American agreement. Initially the EFTA could be the hard core of such a united Europe, with

neutrality as the increasingly influential common denominator of the policies of the European powers.

At the very least, even a partially disengaged Europe would extract an important area from the power-political struggle between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. To this extent the conflict would have become isolated.

Proposals for disengagement have been seriously considered at all disarmament negotiations since the war, and have received support from both East and West. The trouble is that no one has been at all clear as to exactly how they would achieve the end they desire. Consequently all such projects have suffered from an odd air of unreality, the power-balance strategies of armchair theorists, because they have been conceived purely in military terms. The arguments have not been political—how to obtain an atmosphere suitable for genuine progress towards disengagement, or how to build up the authority of the U.N.—but have turned on how many divisions might or might not this move save the NATO High Command.

The Commonwealth

The maintenance of our special links with the independent members of the Commonwealth has always been a vital part of British foreign policy. But the Commonwealth is not static and unchanging in its political outlook. Perhaps nothing better illustrates this point than the attitude of individual Commonwealth countries towards the cold war. Ten years ago it could still safely be said that the Commonwealth was an appendage to the power of the West. But now the picture is totally different. Three member countries, India, Ghana and Ceylon, are firmly and staunchly neutralist. Most of the other Afro-Asian member countries pursue a partially neutralist policy to a greater or lesser extent. Leading politicians in territories such as Tanganyika and Nyasaland have declared their intention of following a neutralist policy when their countries achieve independence. In Canada strong neutralist currents are visible, particularly in the New Socialist Party, but also in the Liberal Opposition. In Australia, the Labour Party has always been unhappy about Australia's military links with the West, and this has been more marked since the pro-American right wing splintered off to form the Democratic Labour Party. The exclusion of South Africa, a country of great strategic value to the West, marked a further and most important stage in the evolution of the Commonwealth. It showed the increasing importance of the views and values of the Afro-Asian members—views and values which would accord well with those of a neutralist Britain. Other neutrals, such as Burma and Iraq, are countries with which Britain has important traditional and economic ties. The Commonwealth therefore provides a base for a British policy of positive neutrality in the world as a whole, in the same way that EFTA does in Europe.

And this brings us to a basic requirement for a neutral Britain: the completion of imperial disengagement. This is a process that has already, of course, gone a long way. But Britain still has a substantial number of

bases and troops overseas—in places like Libya, Cyprus, the Arabian peninsula, Kenya, Malaya, Nigeria and elsewhere. Some of these are mainly 'imperial' commitments like Kenya, others are simply part of the alliance structure, like Libya. But as we have shown, our imperial commitments and our position in the Western Alliance are closely interwoven; for a Britain that was outside NATO, imperial disengagement would become not merely desirable but absolutely essential. At the same time, a policy of positive neutrality would be of immense assistance in helping Britain establish good post-imperial relations with the new countries. A great deal of the prestige Britain could have gained by her decolonisation policy in Africa, for example, has been lost because of our association through NATO with the French policy in Algeria, the Portuguese colonial regimes, and what the Africans call 'neo-colonialism' or economic imperialism.

The establishment of good relations with the Afro-Asian countries would be the keystone of neutral Britain's world policy. Not only Sweden, but Ireland and Yugoslavia have shown what can be done by European neutrals in this respect. Not, of course, that Britain could or should try to form a neutral 'bloc'. The sort of relationship we should aim for with the other neutrals is exactly the sort of political relationship we have with the independent Commonwealth countries: the maximum of consultation and co-operation, the minimum of formal links, ties or commitments. Present neutralist leaders often meet for informal talks. The Prime Minister of a neutralist Britain should try to encourage such meetings, which could perhaps most conveniently be held every autumn, if last year's welcome precedent of Government leaders going to the U.N. General Assembly is continued.

The United Nations

The transformation of the U.N. into an effective world authority must be high on the list of priorities for British foreign policy. Nearly every Labour Party tract on disarmament includes this as a hope for the future. But there is little link with current political reality. We are presented with an analysis of the current international scene and then, by a leap so giant as to deter all but the foolhardy, the statement will conclude with worthy aspirations for world Government. It is hardly surprising if most people find the gap between future aspirations and present practice sadly disillusioning.

Is the position therefore hopeless? Not if the real forces at work in the U.N. are understood. Essentially the U.N. is a body that can, and does, develop in influence and structure with the practical jobs it has to do in the world. This development has been a slow growth in the concept of collective action—military or political—in the world's trouble spots: the Sinai peninsula and the Congo being only the two most dramatic. Now in all cases the U.N. initiative has been taken through the neutrals. And for a very good reason: U.N. action can only be at the level of the highest common factor of agreement of its member nations.

For each of the blocs votes down or vetoes U.N. action by the other. So it is the neutrals that have made the running in areas where U.N. has taken the initiative, from sending troops to Sinai and Congo to exerting U.N. pressure on such topics as Algeria, South Africa and Oman. But the influence and, even more, the physical resources of the neutrals are extremely limited—and U.N. action has itself been limited thereby. It is not often realised how great a burden of U.N. work falls on Sweden, the only highly developed neutral. She provides the hard core of the two U.N. armies; truce supervisors and frontier inspectors in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Korea; innumerable officials in key U.N. posts from Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld downwards, not to mention personnel for specific matters such as the British-Saudi Arabian arbitration over Buraimi. The addition of a technologically advanced country like Britain to the neutralist group of nations would immensely widen the potential scope of U.N. action, enabling a future Secretary-General to call on British contingents for U.N. forces.

There are other steps, too, which a neutral Britain could support to help the U.N. develop in the direction of a world authority. A major weakness of the U.N. is that the Security Council is not an adequate reflection of the whole membership. It is heavily weighted in favour of America by such factors as the exclusion of the People's Republic of China from its rightful place, the seating of Turkey as the 'Eastern European representative' in the Security Council and the continuance of the heavy representation of Latin America, a memorial to the days when that continent made up nearly half the total U.N. membership. At the 1960 session the neutrals firmly supported both the admission of China and the enlargement of the Council to give the Afro-Asians greater representation. Support for these moves by a neutral Britain and her friends could achieve their successful adoption.

Recently, there has been a welcome loosening of the rigid rule that 'internal affairs' should not be discussed. Thus last year Sharpeville and more recently the Portuguese 'African province' of Angola have been subjects for debate by the U.N. Freed from obligations to her military allies, this is a tendency that a neutral Britain could encourage.

There are innumerable other questions, such as extending the powers and effectiveness of the International Court of Justice, enlarging and broadening the basis of the U.N. Secretariat, establishing a permanent police force, revising the charter so as to enlarge the scope of the U.N., where Britain today is inhibited from taking a constructive initiative because of the suspicion of the new nations of such moves coming from a country which is an integral part of one of the power blocs. We have seen how initiatives of this sort best come from uncommitted nations. A neutral Britain would be in a strong position to assist the development of the U.N. along such lines.

Disarmament

A study of the disarmament talks held since the war shows that on the whole, although realistic proposals were put forward with

some degree of urgency by the NATO powers until May, 1955, since that date the arguments have moved further and further into unreality. This was the date on which the Soviet Union almost in toto accepted the proposals put forward by Britain and France the previous autumn. The NATO powers went into cabal for three months, and at the end of this time Harold Stassen, the American representative in Geneva said:

'The U.S. does now place a reservation upon all of its pre-Geneva (i.e. Summit) substantive positions taken in this sub-committee or in the Disarmament Commission or in the U.N. on these questions. . . .'

With these words the U.S. had abandoned formally its search for controlled disarmament. Although we will never know for sure why this step was taken, we can be fairly certain that pressure from the military establishment played a large part. Since that date NATO scepticism concerning the possibility of achieving disarmament has grown, and until recently, at least, official theory in the U.S. was that it had become impossible. The weary progress of the U.N. disarmament commissions and sub-committees has been elegantly disentangled in Philip Noel-Baker's book 'The Arms Race'.

A Test Agreement

However there are now indications that the military pressure in both Russia and America against an atomic test agreement is much reduced, and among the political leaders there seems real desire for a test agreement to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. A test agreement would not seriously damage the military strength of the two great powers. Neither of them has tested a nuclear device since 1958.

A further disarmament agreement, however, is another matter. One main problem—for general disarmament as for a nuclear test agreement—is the building up of adequate control and inspection teams. This could be eased if Britain, after the conclusion of an agreement with America for closing the bases, were to invite the United Nations to observe the progress of the closure. These inspection teams, reinforced by representatives of neutral Britain, could well be the nucleus of control and inspection teams elsewhere in the world, for instance to police the frontiers of any neutral European country that requested their services, rather as the Israel-Arab frontiers are inspected today.

This would not only make the achievement of Soviet-American agreement on, for example, a nuclear test ban and subsequent disarmament steps more likely, but would also have an important role in maintaining it. For much as we desire and work toward disarmament, we must beware of looking on a possible agreement in the way Victorian novelists looked on marriage; get the couple to say 'yes' and they will automatically live happily ever after. The neutrals of Asia and Africa, reinforced by Britain and other European countries would be powerful enough politically and economically to relegate the cold war from being the major issue in world affairs to being only one of several.

Both Messrs. Khrushchev and Kennedy have made it quite clear that they have no intention of relaxing the ideological cold war, whatever disarmament agreement is achieved. As long as the main political developments in the world are generated by the rival ambitions of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., every international political crisis or revolution in states like Laos or Cuba will become a cold war issue and put an immense strain on any great power agreement.

The Spread of Nuclear Weapons

What of other powers acquiring the bomb and using it to spread their influence? This possibility has been widely canvassed in the last few years, and has been referred to as the 'Nth power problem'. Obviously the possession of nuclear weapons by countries other than those which have them at the moment greatly increases the difficulties of obtaining or enforcing a disarmament agreement, whilst at the same time making an 'accidental' nuclear war more likely.

There are two different ways in which further powers can obtain nuclear weapons. The first is by being given them by countries which possess them at the moment. It appears, however, that both America and Russia are not unaware of the dangers of distributing such weapons, and so far have taken care to ensure that the weapons they have stationed in other countries are securely under their own control. Were they the *only* countries to possess nuclear weapons, that is, were Britain and France not to have them or to have given them up, both the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. would be in a stronger position to withstand pressure from their allies for weapons. Furthermore, as more countries become neutralist, clearly the fewer there are to whom the Big Two would be tempted to give weapons.

The second method by which other powers could obtain nuclear weapons is by making them themselves. The economic and technical arguments against any power making its own bomb are stronger than is sometimes realised. Economic reasons led to the abandonment of Blue Streak, and with it a genuinely independent deterrent, by Britain, still the world's fourth industrial power. Even our famed V-Bomber force will have to carry American rockets—if Mr. Watkinson can get them. Other countries will make the sacrifice and produce the bomb only if they believe it is vital for their security, as China, believing herself threatened by the U.S. string of nuclear bases in the Pacific, probably does today. But a country may, of course, have an exaggerated notion of what constitutes a threat to its security. For most countries, the requirements in terms of technical know-how and an adequate supply of fissile materials almost certainly imply the, at least tacit, support of one of the great powers for the venture (France and the projected Israeli bomb is a good example). A few neutrals, notably Sweden, have seriously considered having their own bomb. But so far in all cases the arguments against—both economic and political—have outweighed any possible advantages and would certainly do so for a neutral Britain.

The main hope is to try to create such a world situation that the arguments against any country having its own bomb—already considerable, as we have seen—are greater than the arguments in favour. Again the neutrals are important here. For it is only the neutrals who can make the U.N. an effective collective security body; it is only the growth of the U.N. that can do away with what countries feel to be the need for having a bomb.

5. The Arguments Against Neutralism

WE have seen something of the scope of possible action for a neutral Britain. What then are the disadvantages commonly alleged in opposition to Britain taking such a step?

In the first case, it is suggested, a neutral Britain would be alone, isolated and without allies; her voice in the council chambers of the world would have been lost. The impressive evidence of the growth of neutralism in the rest of the world, discussed earlier, should be sufficient to demonstrate the fallacy of this argument. Who can doubt that a neutral Britain's voice would ring with more authority in the U.N. than our present Government's too enthusiastic echo of Washington? What is really implied in this argument is that we will lose our voice in NATO. But we have already seen that Britain cannot persuade NATO from within; thus the value of our dissenting voice in its councils must be small indeed, and the reasons for leaving an alliance which has become hostile to our best interests are redoubled.

It has been said that such a policy as we have proposed would have disastrous political repercussions in the United States. The Americans may try to prevent Britain becoming neutralist by sanctions of one sort or another. Some, including Mr. Strachey, have even suggested that, feeling themselves isolated, the Americans might try to launch a preventive war in an attempt to avoid what might otherwise seem inevitable defeat. Let us examine each of these propositions in turn. There are two things which the U.S. Government might do to oppose the policy of a neutralist Government in Britain. It might simply say that it proposed to keep its base at, say Holy Loch, whether the British Government liked it or not. This is exactly what has happened with the big American base at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, and as long as the Americans can send in supplies by sea, as they could do at Holy Loch as well, there is little Castro can do about it directly; secondly, the Americans might apply economic sanctions against Britain as again she has done with Cuba. Either step would force a neutralist Britain into a politically more anti-American position than would otherwise be desirable, and economic sanctions in particular could be a two-edged weapon, for there are enormous American business interests in this country. For these reasons, such steps by the U.S. are not likely, but they are possible and must be taken into consideration.

Preventive War ?

On the question of a preventive war, again the whole tendency has been the reverse. America came nearer than she has been at any other time to beginning a world war over Chinese intervention in Korea in

1950-1951, when she was politically all-powerful in the world. As more and more of her former allies become neutralist, American policy has veered away from preventive war, and peaceful co-existence is now regarded seriously in Washington, as it never was in 1950. But the danger of adverse American reaction exists, and precautions must be taken to prevent it. We have already estimated that our withdrawal from NATO will occupy a period of three years. During this time, all the evidence goes to show that American reliance upon Polaris and intercontinental missiles such as the Minuteman, and her corresponding independence of overseas nuclear bases, will increase. It should be possible to phase our withdrawal in such a way as to ensure that at no time does America feel that the balance of military power between her and the USSR is being drastically altered. With careful diplomacy and explanation of our motives, there seems no reason to fear an outbreak of American hysteria or paranoia.

Would the policy outlined in this pamphlet mean Britain forfeiting her place at the disarmament negotiating table? Now this country has been represented at the Geneva talks not by virtue of the Anglo-American Alliance but because she has her own nuclear weapons. If she ceases to manufacture her own bomb, it is, of course, possible that there would be no place for her at the negotiations. This is a factor that must be frankly faced by unilateralists and neutralists. But it must also be faced by the Parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party, for Britain is just as likely to forfeit her place at Geneva if their policy of abandoning the British bomb and relying on America's is adopted. Indeed, almost certainly more likely. For a non-nuclear Britain would be much more acceptable to all the other participants as a neutral than as a military appendage of the U.S. It has already been suggested by both America and Russia that leading neutrals like India should join the disarmament talks.

One other objection to British neutrality was raised by Mr. Gaitskell at Scarborough, and again by Mr. Strachey in his pamphlet 'The Pursuit of Peace'. It is that West Germany would then be America's main ally in Europe, and that Bonn would increasingly influence America with reactionary policies. This objection ignores the dynamic of change and development in politics. For consider the immensely fluid position that would be created in European diplomacy following a British withdrawal from the American alliance. Russia would promptly put forward some offer of reunification as the price of German neutrality. There would be the desire for improved economic relations with Eastern Germany and Russia itself—already an issue in West German politics.

Germany's economic needs are a vital factor in the European situation. Increasingly West Germany has been building up her trade with her partners in the Common Market, with neutral countries and with Eastern Europe. Association with 'imperialist allies' has sometimes been an embarrassment to the Germans. If neutralism develops elsewhere in Europe, Germany might find it hard to resist adopting such a policy herself for economic as well as political reasons.

Defenceless Britain ?

Finally, we must deal with the possibility of a Russian attack, made so much of by Mr. Strachey and his fellow NATO protagonists. After Britain has left NATO, what is to stop the Russians—or anyone else—occupying Britain? The first point to make here is that a neutralist Britain would in all respects be very much stronger than any of the countries that are at present neutralist. And Russia has never tried to occupy a single neutralist country. The reason is perfectly simple—a country's security is as much a function of its foreign policy as it is of what is usually meant by the term 'defence'. That is, a country must so arrange its policies that **nothing is to be gained by another country in showing hostility.** Consider the question Mr. Strachey asks in his pamphlet: what is to stop the Russians dropping an H-bomb on Oxford if Britain is outside NATO and without nuclear weapons? This is a very difficult point to come to grips with because Mr. Strachey is so vague. International crises of the level he envisages just do not occur in a vacuum. Let us then try to consider in what specific circumstances it could possibly be to Russia's advantage to start issuing threats against, and even more attacking with nuclear weapons, a neutral state. Never, since she became a nuclear power, has Russia behaved in this way to a neutral. Once she did so to Britain: at the time of Suez. Whether or not the Soviet threat was instrumental in securing the Anglo-French withdrawal we shall perhaps never know, but it is a fair point for those who wish to make it: a neutral Britain would lose the 'freedom' to commit aggression on the Suez pattern. The collective security of the U.N. would spring into action against us as it did then and we would be even less able than we were in 1956 to withstand international pressure, backed by any threatening noises either of the Great Powers may make. For remember that Russia only issued her threat against us *after* the U.N. had condemned our action and the Afro-Asians and practically the whole world, including the U.S., were in full cry against us.

But what Mr. Strachey seems to be imagining is rather different: a neutral Britain suddenly ordered by Russia to do some unspecified act or receive a bomb on Oxford. What act? What conceivable thing could a British Government be 'ordered' to do that would compensate Russia for the inevitable result of driving every other neutral in the world into America's arms? Such a threat to Britain would only make even a glimmer of sense if Britain herself had committed an act of aggression as at Suez which rendered her abhorrent to practically the whole world. The answer to Mr. Strachey's question as to what would stop the Russians is therefore simple; exactly what stops them dropping an H-bomb on Stockholm, Cairo, Delhi or Rangoon, namely, the elementary fact that it would do them no good at all and would defeat every objective of Soviet policy. No, Mr. Strachey, what the Russians would send to a neutralist Britain would not be a plane carrying a bomb, but exactly what they have sent to other neutrals—a top level mission with plans for economic and techno-

logical co-operation. In Britain's case, the machine tool industry could certainly benefit from Russian advice.

Would not Britain be relying on the 'balance of terror' between the two Great Powers to maintain her neutrality? In a sense every neutral today does so. The balance of terror between the U.S. and Russia is an objective fact of world politics. The policy of other neutrals and the policy we are advocating for Britain means in effect a gradual political erosion of the blocs outwards from a neutralist centre. The present neutrals, as we have seen, have had immense success to date in this and thereby have helped to bring about less militant cold war policies by the two Great Powers. The argument that it is immoral to be neutral because one's neutrality is initially dependent on the balance of terror is fantastic. To be a member of a bloc serves to perpetuate the evil: a neutral Britain's policy would aim to first reduce, and eventually end, the domination of world politics by the blocs.

Neutrality and the British Political Scene

What is the attitude of the British people towards the Cold War? The Americans do not share the complacency of so much of our Establishment press that Britain is completely behind Washington. The official American Government Information Agency (USIA) last year conducted a poll in Britain. A full report appeared in the *New York Times* of 27th October, 1960. The key question was:

'In the present world situation, do you personally think that, on the whole, Britain should side with the United States, USSR or with neither?'

With United States	...	...	42%
With USSR	...	...	2%
With Neither	...	...	46%
Don't Know	...	...	10%

The USIA report drew what consolation it could from the fact that support for the United States 'remains far ahead' of that for Russia, but it is clear that the most significant feature of the poll is that the vote for non-alignment in the cold war topped that for support of the United States. Admittedly the poll was taken only a month or so after the abortive summit and disgust with America over the U2 incident may have played a part. Nonetheless it must be remembered that until very recently the neutralist case has largely gone by default in Britain. The majority for non-alignment is all the more remarkable when it is realised that ever since the war nearly all press, radio and TV opinion has been in support of the U.S. alliance. This survey, coupled with the widespread feeling against the establishment of the Polaris-carrying submarine base, the anti-base marches that are such a feature of our current politics, and the increasing support for the CND, shows that the Scarborough decision reflected a real movement of opinion amongst the British people.

Can the Labour Party rally this potential majority of the people for a policy of positive neutrality? The most successful neutralist countries

have been those where the governing party is broadly based and where internal party pressures help to keep the government on a firm middle course between the blocs. The Congress Party of India is an interesting example. There the business interests of its right wing feel more kinship with the United States, whilst other elements and those who speak for them often feel that Russia offers a better model for the future India. Any other foreign policy except neutrality would probably split Congress wide open.

The Labour Party could provide such a neutralist force in Britain. It is a pretty heterogeneous party: the right wing economists with their admiration for so much of the American way of life; the militant left wing to whom the Russian and Chinese revolutions are the most stimulating events of our era; and finally the increasingly powerful centre with varying degrees of admiration both for Soviet economic and social achievements and for the American traditions of liberal democracy.

With a power bloc foreign policy, the composition of the party is a serious embarrassment, as Mr. Gaitskell is finding today, as Ernest Bevin found before him and as Konni Zilliacus would also find if he were a Labour Foreign Secretary. For a foreign policy of neutrality, however, the existence of such diverse tendencies within one political framework, far from being a liability, becomes a definite asset. Pressure from both right and left on a Labour neutralist foreign secretary would in fact help him, not hinder him. The Scarborough decision has given the Labour Party a policy on which it can rally the country to work for the freedom and real independence of Britain—and to use that independence to strive for a more stable and peaceful world.

CONCLUSION

WE believe that a decisive point has been reached in the history of the post-war world. The tremendous growth in number and influence of the neutral powers opens up the possibility of a new world order, based not on the rigid polarisation of the world but on the gradual growth of an effective world authority. Certainly, unless such an authority is evolved, a nuclear war is sooner or later almost inevitable. The first steps in the right direction have already been made, but further progress is inhibited in a world political climate still dominated by the cold war. Such a world authority can only be fostered if the blocs cease to be mainsprings of international politics.

The objectives for which Britain entered the Atlantic Alliance are now becoming less and less relevant. Yet this alliance has become for us an end in itself, a way of thinking and a habit of mind. Britain, a trading nation that no longer has an empire, has a specially strong interest in the development of world authority, and is peculiarly well placed to strengthen it. The time is therefore ripe for a redirection of British policy. This is an opportunity which the Labour Party and the nation as a whole should not let slip.

THE YOUNG FABIAN GROUP

was set up in the summer of last year. Its purpose is to give Socialists under thirty years of age an opportunity to carry out research, discussion and propaganda upon contemporary problems which they consider important. It will publish at least three pamphlets a year, and holds day and week-end schools at irregular intervals. The first publication of the Group was *Lady Albemarle's Boys*, by Ray Gosling, which came out in January.

The Group is autonomous, electing its own committee. It does of course co-operate with the Fabian Society, which gives financial and clerical help. But the Group is responsible for its own policy and activity, subject to the constitutional rule that it can have no declared political policy beyond that implied by its commitment to democratic Socialism.

The activities of the Group are intended to be complementary to, and not competitive with, the activities of other left-wing youth organisations like the Young Socialists, the New Left, NALSO, etc. The hope is simply that a Young Fabian Group, more adventurous, perhaps, than its parent body, may make its contribution to the development of a vigorous and radical critique of present-day society.

Enquiries about membership should be sent to

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