

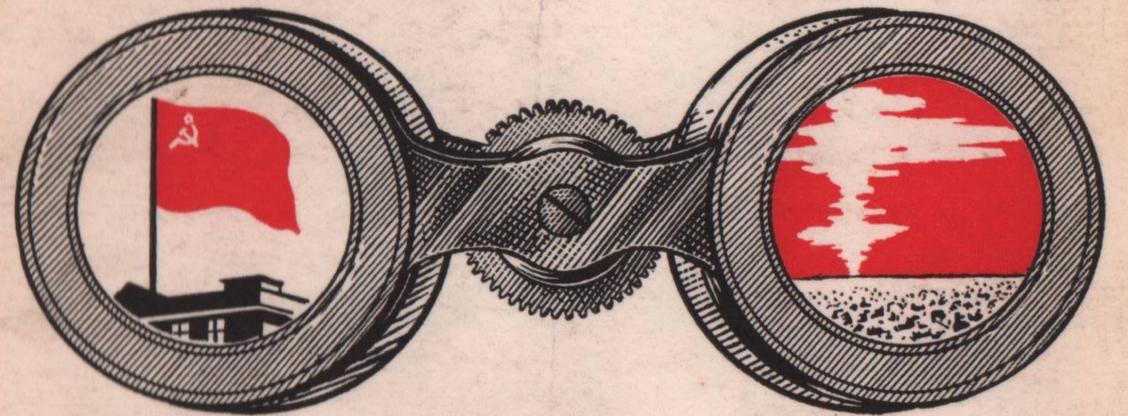
THE CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

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BALANCE OF RISKS



Communism
or Nuclear War



by **TERENCE HEELAS**

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FOREWORD

Successful statecraft consists in balancing one risk against another, and choosing the lesser of the two. Unfortunately this is not an automatic process. Politicians tend to be hypnotised by one particular risk to the exclusion of others. Thus British and French leaders in the inter-war years became so obsessed with the threat of international communism that they overlooked the far greater menace of Hitler's Germany until it was too late. Some even regarded the growth of Nazism as a useful deterrent to Soviet expansion.

To-day many Western leaders are still so concerned about the Red Peril (or its Yellow equivalent) that they cannot appreciate the greater dangers of an unrestricted arms race and the spread of nuclear weapons. Yet most qualified observers agree that the risk of Communist aggression is decreasing quite rapidly, whilst that of unpremeditated nuclear war is increasing with every year that passes. A balance between these two risks must be drawn, and our policies altered accordingly, if the new "deterrent" is not to prove more fatal than the old.

In this pamphlet I hope to make a rational assessment of the conflicting risks, and to suggest means by which this country can contribute to a safer and saner world. I address it particularly to those who have so far supported the arms race and the British nuclear force (however reluctantly) because they have either over-estimated the extent of the Soviet threat or under-estimated the nuclear one.

Because neither of these threats can be precisely measured, my view of their relative urgency and importance can only be a personal one. But I shall try to make my analysis as dispassionate as possible ; and I shall be satisfied if I can establish one side of a continuing dialogue between men of goodwill on both sides. It is, after all, the most important dialogue of our time. On its outcome may depend the survival of the civilisation that has given rise to it.

TERENCE HEELAS

Lustleigh

Devon

"To-day, each inhabitant of this planet must contemplate the day when it may no longer be habitable. Every man, woman and child lives beneath a nuclear Sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident, miscalculation or madness. We must abolish the weapons of war before they abolish us."

—JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY

"On balance, the likelihood of destruction through accident or mistaken judgment, if we continue to rely on nuclear weapons, is greater than that of conquest by Russia if they were abandoned."

—CAPT. B. H. LIDDELL HART

PART I—THE NUCLEAR THREAT

The Principle of Deterrence

All governments have a duty to protect their citizens from outside aggression. But this responsibility is subject to one reservation: the measures taken to guard against aggression must not be more dangerous than the threat they are meant to deter. Deterrence is only acceptable on this condition.

Nations have always tried to deter aggression by building up armed forces to discourage a potential enemy. Sometimes deterrence has worked: too often it has failed. The cost of failure has been war; and war has led to victory or defeat—both very costly in terms of human life. But victory has usually seemed worth the cost; and even defeat has proved survivable. Despite its frequent failure, therefore, deterrence has seemed justified up to now because the cost of failure has never been absolute.

Nuclear weapons, however, have brought an entirely new factor into the equation. The cost of failure has now been raised to the point at which deterrence must be 100 per cent effective if it is to justify itself. Even ninety-nine per cent effectiveness is not enough: total destruction would follow if the hundredth chance turned up.

The old idea that nuclear weapons have made war impossible is now rejected by military analysts. The risks of deterrence are much better understood than they used to be, and most responsible observers agree with the late President Kennedy that the weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us. Research has shown that nuclear deterrence is far from being 100 per cent effective. It cannot therefore be justified except as a temporary and highly dangerous expedient to be abolished as soon as possible.

The Risks of Deterrence

Let us examine the risks as objectively as possible. Much research by eminent strategists and academicians can be boiled down to the following propositions—and these, in turn, can be reduced to the single assertion that human nature is too unpredictable a basis for a gamble on man's continued existence.

1. *Human or Mechanical Failure.* No man is free from the possibility of error, and no weapon devised by man is foolproof. As the number of nuclear weapons increases, and their reaction-times grow less, so the likelihood of accident grows greater. Bombers can be recalled: missiles cannot. Four hours' warning gives time for reflection and consultation: four minutes' warning gives time for neither. Even the Hot Line can only mitigate the dangers; it cannot remove them.

2. *Unauthorised Behaviour.* At times of crisis, military personnel more fanatical or less balanced than the political leadership might force the issue to the point of war whenever the politicians seemed weak or indecisive. Military leaders—one has only to think of the OAS generals—are not always loyal to civilian authority. And during actual hostilities, military commanders in the field might try to retrieve a desperate situation by using tactical nuclears on their own initiative, especially if communications had broken down.

3. *Technological Breakthrough.* Both Russia and America are trying to build effective anti-missile defences. The first to succeed will be tempted to blackmail the other into submission, if only to guard itself against the possibility of future attack. If the less successful nation refuses to submit, a one-sided nuclear war might follow. One should add that this particular risk is fairly remote owing to the difficulty and expense of effective anti-missile defence.

4. *Pre-emption (anticipating an enemy attack).* When international tension is high, both sides will be tempted to strike first in order to destroy or mitigate the capacity of the enemy to strike back. This is especially true of smaller nuclear Powers that have little or no second-strike capability. Such Powers must strike first or not at all.

5. *Catalysis (involuntary involvement).* Smaller Powers, fearing desertion by their major allies, may force the issue by using (or threatening to use) their own nuclear weapons as a trigger to the larger nuclear forces in the alliance. This possibility encourages the major Powers to withdraw still further into isolationism, thus increasing the fears and suspicions of their already mistrustful allies.

6. *Nth-power Proliferation (uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons).* These fears and suspicions drive the smaller Powers into trying to obtain an illusory nuclear independence, so forming

a vicious circle. An uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons increases all the other dangers, destabilises the precarious "Balance of Terror," and postpones or inhibits the one long-term hope for humanity—agreed and controlled disarmament.

7. *Escalation.* Any minor war involving the Great Powers or their allies could "escalate" by stages into total nuclear war. Unless such wars are smothered at birth, it becomes extremely hard to control them. Neither of the Great Powers is likely to admit defeat while its most effective weapons remain unused; and the emotion-ridden atmosphere of actual conflict makes a compromise agreement even more difficult than usual to arrive at.

8. *Bluff and Counter-Bluff.* Although neither of the Great Powers is at all likely to launch a deliberate attack on the other, both are liable to miscalculate the other's intentions when intermediate areas are in dispute. Thus Khrushchev might have made good his threat to defend Cuba with nuclear weapons; and Johnson may yet make good his promise to defend Berlin. Neither act would be rational, because one does not rationally sacrifice the whole for the part. But, where each side thinks that the other is bluffing, both are liable to go over the brink.

9. *The Inevitability of Change.* Because the *status quo* cannot be preserved indefinitely, and because *coups d'etats*, revolutions and counter-revolutions will inevitably occur from time to time, both Great Powers—fearing an unfavourable swing in the balance of power—will be tempted to intervene. Direct confrontations of this nature could well result in an uncontrollable escalation.

10. *Self-Propagation.* Because mutually-agreed disarmament is so difficult to obtain, because suspicion leads to fear and fear leads to suspicion, because powerful vested interests wish to prolong and extend the arms race, and—above all—because nuclear deterrence has "worked" up to now, the arms race may yet prove to be self-propagating and self-perpetuating. Deterrence only has to fail *once*. Until it does, there is a danger that its proponents will continue to prefer it to the risks and uncertainties of disarmament. This is perhaps the most significant danger of all.

Two things should be noted. Firstly the dangers listed above are unlikely to occur singly. They are more likely to interact. The recipe for World War III would probably contain elements of half-a-dozen different risks, each exacerbating the others and being exacerbated in turn. Secondly, most of these risks will become more dangerous with the passage of time unless positive and far-reaching measures are taken to alleviate or remove them.

The major Powers appear willing to initiate such measures, but they are hampered by public opinion (in America) and by the intransigence of certain allies. Let us now examine these alliances (with special reference to NATO) to see whether or not they contribute to international stability in an age of increasing uncertainty.

Collective Insecurity

The purpose of a peace-time alliance is to protect the weaker nations involved by threatening an aggressor with reprisals from the most powerful nation in the alliance. For such reprisals to constitute an effective deterrent, they must be "credible" to the potential aggressor: he must believe that an attack on one or more of the lesser nations will automatically lead to his own destruction by the most powerful member of the group.

There was a time when NATO was a credible military grouping. When America needed European bases for its medium-range bombers as much as Europe needed American nuclear support, the two halves of the alliance were militarily interdependent. America would have certainly used every weapon in her arsenal to defend bases so necessary to her own defence—particularly as at that time America was more or less invulnerable to Soviet attack. But to-day America relies on home-based missiles for her defence, and the European bases are being phased out because they are too vulnerable to an attack by Soviet medium-range rockets.

At the same time, America has become enormously vulnerable to Soviet missile attacks. A "Saturation Balance" will shortly be reached in which either of the Great Powers could destroy the other, irrespective of which struck first. This makes it unlikely that the Americans would voluntarily wage an all-out nuclear war in defence of Europe. There must be a "Cut-off point in carnage" (the phrase is Richard Fryklund's) beyond which the most courageous American President dare not go in defence of his allies. Herman Kahn, the foremost of American strategists, has put it thus: "No American that I have spoken to who was at all serious about the matter believed that any U.S. action, limited or unlimited, would be justified—*no matter what our commitments were* (my italics)—if more than half of our population would be killed in retaliation."

This has led American defence experts to abandon the old policy of Massive Retaliation in favour of less damaging strategies such as Counterforce and Controlled Response. These new

concepts are designed to limit the level of a Western response to a Russian attack so that American *and* Russian cities would avoid destruction. It is argued that the Russians would find a *limited* response more credible than an American promise to commit national suicide.

But the nations of Western Europe are naturally reluctant to be "defended" by strategies that would keep American and Russian cities out of the firing-line while Europe was being devastated by conventional or tactical nuclear war. They see little advantage in America fighting to the last European in defence of its allies, while Russia and the United States remain virtually intact.

Nor are they happy to see the *certainty* of American nuclear intervention on their behalf being replaced by a mere *possibility* that such intervention would occur as a result of involuntary escalation. The possibility of such escalation existed at the time of the 1962 Cuban crisis ; but in the event the Russians backed down because the Americans held the "conventional options"—they could have occupied Cuba without exploding a single nuclear bomb. In Berlin the boot is on the other foot.

So NATO Europe must now choose between the following :

1. Relying on continuing American support, with its diminishing credibility and its ever-present risks—for Europe could at any time become involved in total war as a by-product of American action in the Caribbean or the Pacific.
2. Persuading the Americans to share the "Command and Control" of the American deterrent with their European allies.
3. Building its own nuclear force or forces which Mr. MacNamara has described as "dangerous, expensive, prone to obsolescence and lacking in credibility as a deterrent."
4. Seeking an accommodation with the Soviet Union by way of a phased disengagement in Central Europe, leading to the reunification of a neutralised Germany, and eventually to the neutrality of the whole of Europe from the Russian frontier to the Atlantic.

I have already pointed to the weaknesses of the first choice. The second is not really a choice at all. The Americans simply dare not allow European fingers to rest on a trigger which, once it was pulled, would lead to America's own destruction. Nor can

the Americans allow European thumbs to hover over the safety-catch, as this would diminish the credibility of the deterrent as a whole—the least-threatened or most vulnerable nations would reach for the safety-catch whenever the most-threatened or least vulnerable was reaching for the trigger. Incidentally, this last objection makes the joint control of a single European deterrent as impossible as a European share in the control of America's nuclear forces, or of the projected multilateral force.

The third possibility is invalidated by the fact that it would (a) drive America into premature isolation for fear of catalytic involvement. (b) force a choice between surrender and suicide in the event of a conventional Soviet attack, because Europe certainly cannot afford adequate nuclear *and* conventional forces (America spends more on its nuclear forces alone than NATO Europe spends on its entire defence), and (c) lead to Soviet pre-emption if Germany participates in a European nuclear force. Above all, nuclear proliferation is enormously dangerous in itself, and would delay or prevent the signing of a viable disarmament agreement.

Only the fourth solution contains an element of hope. Hope for German reunification (which cannot be achieved by other means) ; hope for the nations of Eastern Europe (which cannot rid themselves of Soviet occupation by other means) ; hope for Western Europe (which is indefensible by other means) ; and hope for the human race (which cannot avoid an unlimited nuclear arms race by other means).

But no policy, however hopeful, is entirely free from risk. A neutral and denuclearised Western Europe, whatever the built-in safeguards, would inevitably run a risk of Soviet occupation if the USSR went berserk, threw overboard the pretence of being a champion of the under-privileged, and destroyed its prospects of spreading Communism by peaceful means in Asia, Africa and South America. Whether it could successfully administer a hostile population much larger than its own is another matter. I shall review the nature and extent of the Soviet threat in another chapter.

Meanwhile we should recognise that the Western Alliance to-day is breaking apart for essentially the same reasons that have led to the Sino-Soviet split. The two major Powers are not prepared to be immolated on a pyre lit by their more intransigent allies ; and the Chinese and Europeans (particularly the French) are no longer disposed to accept a position of total dependence on Russia or the United States. The long-range rocket on the one hand, and the growing self-confidence of China and Europe on the other, have led to a situation in which Collective Security by way of regional and ideological pacts is leading to a kind of Collective *Insecurity*.

PART II—THE SOVIET THREAT

Current Assessments

It is generally assumed by Western leaders and public opinion alike that the threat of Soviet military aggression is both real and urgent. How has this climate of opinion come about? Can it be relied upon? Before examining the nature of the Soviet threat myself, I would like to suggest the following reasons why both the politicians and the public may have been misled.

1. Politicians, as history amply confirms, are not immune from error. Even the greatest statesmen of the past have blundered; and their more ordinary colleagues have blundered consistently. I have no reason to suppose that the present incumbents are any more far-sighted than their predecessors.

2. Western politicians are usually drawn from the more privileged sections of society, and naturally view with the greatest suspicion a system such as Communism that opposes everything for which they stand. It is no accident that the main opposition to Communism comes from the richer nations, or from wealthy minorities in less fortunate states, for these have the most to lose.

3. The advice that these politicians receive comes mainly from sources as privileged as themselves—senior civil servants and the like. This need not invalidate the advice; but everyone is influenced, consciously or not, by his own interest and environment. Military advisers, in particular, are conditioned by the fact that any real measure of disarmament would endanger their own employment.

4. Public opinion in Western countries is moulded by mass-media controlled by the same relatively restricted social class that sees itself most threatened by a Communist society. There is a natural tendency for ordinary men and women to accept the standards laid down for them; and the standards of belief in Western countries are laid down by those whose anti-communism is most self-interested.

5. All societies tend to find scapegoats for their own deficiencies, and Western societies find such a scapegoat in Communism. On the other side of the Iron Curtain the situation is

reversed. When things go wrong it is always easier to blame International Communism or Capitalist Imperialism than to reform one's own society.

None of the above should be taken as evidence that there is *no* Communist threat. It should, however, serve to remind us that current assessments of the danger are drawn from the sources most likely to exaggerate them. The same, of course, holds good in Communist societies, where Top Communists are disposed to exaggerate the aggressive designs of Western capitalists, and to transmit their obsessive fears to less exalted levels.

Perhaps I can best illustrate my point by citing a revealing quotation from the late John Foster Dulles. Writing as long ago as 1939 (of another enemy and an earlier arms race) he said: "In order to bring a nation to support the burdens incident to maintaining great military establishments, it is necessary to *create* (my italics) an emotional state akin to war psychology . . . This involves the development to a high degree of the Nation-Hero, Nation-Villain ideology." In other words, politicians must do their best to exaggerate the dangers or the man-in-the-street may not be willing to foot the armaments bill. The pity of it is the politicians are so often the first victims of their own propaganda, and so bring about the very conditions they fear. Hatred is a two-edged sword that breeds the suspicion it feeds upon, if I may be forgiven an unusually mixed metaphor.

How Real IS the Threat?

It would be idle to pretend that an infallible assessment of the Communist threat can be arrived at by me any more than by the Western politicians I have criticised. The best I can do is to list some of the commoner "proofs" of Soviet aggressiveness, and suggest alternative explanations. My interpretations may be mistaken, but they will serve to balance the accusations of those to whom a "Nation-villain ideology" is a necessity.

1. "*World-wide domination is the admitted aim of Communism.*" In fact, Marxists believe that world-communism will arrive through the working out of an ineluctable historical process. Why, then, should Communist states imperil their social and economic progress (much less their very existence) by waging war against those less "fortunate" countries still dominated by a doomed and decadent capitalism? If one's own horse is a certain winner, why run the risk of nobbling the other runners? When Marx and Lenin foresaw the inevitability of conflict, they saw it in terms of internal revolution—not of external aggression by the People's Democracies.

2. "*Russia has already proved her aggressiveness by taking over the Baltic States and half of Poland.*" In fact the boundaries of the Soviet Union are much the same to-day as they were before 1917. The Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 (however cynical as an act of policy) led to the giving back of territories taken from her in 1918 at the treaty of Brest-Litovsk by the Kaiser's Germany, later confirmed by the victorious allies at Versailles . . . most of whom were guilty of aggression against the Soviet Union in the years 1918—1921.

3. "*The Russians have deliberately imposed satellite status on the nations of Eastern Europe.*" True and regrettable. Yet the only alternative was to allow these States (many of them ex-allies of Nazi Germany) to turn towards a traditionally anti-communist America that enjoyed a monopoly of atomic weapons. Could a Russia that had just lost twenty million dead, with its productive capacity halved, and led by an insanely suspicious Stalin, have foregone an opportunity to build a *Cordon Sanitaire* against the possibility of further invasion? And would the United States, strong as it is, allow *its* neighbours to opt for Communism if swift military action could prevent them from doing so?

4. "*The Communist States have consistently undermined democratic governments, and promoted Communist subversion abroad.*" Very true. But have not the Western countries tried to export democracy, and promoted counter-revolution where this seemed feasible? Ought we to expect a higher standard of non-intervention from the Communist states than we practise ourselves? It seems a little naive to draw a moral distinction between Communist and Western attempts to further their interests abroad. Given a free vote, East Germans would certainly join the West; but would the Vietnamese, the South Koreans and the Formosans necessarily remain loyal to the West?

5. "*The Communist bloc has built up vast military machines aimed at intimidating, and perhaps conquering, the peaceable democracies.*" But the peaceable democracies have built even vaster military machines. We now learn that the "conventional gap" was as illusory as the "missile gap" so ingeniously exploited by American Democrats in the years before the 1960 elections. To-day the West has more men under arms, more bombers and more missiles than Russia, China and the satellite states put together. We know (do we not?) that *our* military preparations are defensive. Is it impossible to believe that the Russians see *their* military dispositions as defensive, too?

None of the above excuses the Communist Powers for occupying foreign territory, for sowing dissension abroad, or for building up great military establishments. But it may serve to explain it.

The fact that the Communists are as certain of our aggressive intentions as we are of theirs should also be allowed for. It is a fact, after all, that the Western allies invaded the newly-formed Soviet Republics in the years following the First World War. It is a fact that Hitler's Germany was encouraged by certain Western politicians as a useful barrier to Communism, and that later it carried out the most savage invasion in history against the USSR. It is a fact that, even to-day, the United States recognises the corrupt and discredited Kuomintang as the legitimate rulers of China. It is a fact that the Soviet Union is ringed with American bomber and missile bases. It is a fact that Cuba was invaded with American connivance. Can we blame the Russians and Chinese for being suspicious of Western intentions?

The tragedy of the situation to-day is that both sides are so terrified of each other that they respond by threatening each other with annihilation, and these threats naturally increase the terror. "What is being done in America is being done because of Russia; what is being done in Russia is being done because of America; and so the appalling spiral ascends with ever-increasing velocity"*

For a sober assessment of Soviet intentions, may I again refer you to that most dedicated of anti-communists, John Foster Dulles. In 1949, when the Soviet "threat" seemed most imminent, he told a select group of religious leaders that "The Soviet Government, under conditions now prevailing, does not contemplate war as an instrument of national policy. I do not know of any high official, in this Government or any Government, who believes that the Soviet State now plans conquest by open military aggression."

One feels entitled to ask why, if this was the considered view of Western Governments when the Soviet threat—under Stalin—was assumed to be at its height, they have behaved then and since as if the aggressiveness of Soviet intentions was, and is, the central fact of international life?

*David Divine: Defence Correspondent of the "Sunday Times"

PART III—THE WAY OUT

I have perhaps said enough to suggest that Western leaders have consistently over-estimated the Communist threat and underestimated the nuclear one. Our problem now is to disentangle ourselves from nuclear alliances, and rid ourselves of nuclear weapons, without creating a worse situation than already exists.

Let me again quote the greatest of Western defence experts, Capt. Liddell Hart: "If we had not entered a military alliance based on such an extremely precarious kind of defence, we should be safer than we are now—as Sweden and Switzerland are safer. But it would be difficult for us to withdraw into a similar neutrality without precipitating the collapse of NATO and tempting the Kremlin to exploit this." Difficult, but not impossible.

NATO is in any case collapsing. Withdrawal depends on its method and timing. An immediate and unconditional withdrawal might well prove disastrous. But a carefully phased withdrawal, negotiated with our allies and accompanied by concessions from the Russians, might allow us the comparative safety of neutrality without upsetting the apple-cart. The risks involved in present policies are such that a radical change of policy is imperative if we are not to remain a priority target in World War III.

We should remember that our allies are as much threatened as we are, and as anxious to avoid the risks and penalties of remaining part of a disintegrating alliance. The Americans naturally wish to avoid catalytic involvement in a nuclear war starting in Europe. The Germans desire the reunification of their country—which certainly cannot come about as long as West Germany is in NATO. The French want a degree of political independence that is incompatible with continued membership of the alliance. Italy and the smaller NATO countries are no more anxious than we are to remain in the front line of an ideological struggle that imperils their existence whenever the Great Powers come to the brink.

But if we are to influence our allies to adopt a more rational policy, we must first be rational ourselves. Our first step must be to rid ourselves of our quasi-independent "deterrent."

As a military instrument it is worse than useless. We cannot use it as a first-strike system without committing suicide. As a second-strike system the V-bombers are ineffective; most of them would be destroyed on the ground, and the remainder will not be able to pierce Soviet defences after 1965, whatever an embattled Air Ministry may say to the contrary. In any case, what are known as "bee-sting" deterrents invite pre-emption. Bees are not infrequently killed *because* of their sting. And to keep nuclear weapons as a means of protecting Malaysia or the Gulf Sheikdoms would be simply nonsensical; their use would isolate us from our friends, enrage the uncommitted world, and incur the risk of Soviet reprisals.

As a diplomatic device, nuclear weapons are no less inept for countries such as ours. If we claim special privilege because of our nuclear status, other nations will aspire to a similar status. By giving up the Bomb we may not immediately persuade other nations to do the same; but by keeping it we automatically encourage other nations to follow our example. Why, after all, should "lesser" nations forgo the privileges we continually boast of?

The next step would be for us to persuade our allies that NATO cannot remain a viable alliance for ever, and that other means must be found of mitigating the Soviet threat (assuming it exists) and reaching a political settlement in Europe that removes the present anomalies and gives a more permanent security to all concerned.

The most hopeful of these means, as I have already tried to make clear, would be to negotiate on the basis of the Gaitskell and Rapacki Plans for areas of nuclear and conventional disengagement in Central Europe. When such an agreement has been reached (and it would be as much in Russia's interests as ours) we should proceed to the next stage—a progressive de-nuclearisation of all Europe from the Soviet frontiers to the Atlantic, accompanied by a stage-by-stage withdrawal of Russian and American troops.

The old argument that the military neutralisation of so large an area would create a dangerous military vacuum that the Russians would be better able to fill than the Americans is less valid than it used to be. Even ex-President Eisenhower has recommended the reduction of the American presence in Europe to a token force, and Operation Big Lift has shown that vast quantities of troops can be ferried across the Atlantic in a matter of hours. Observer-posts on Soviet territory would guard against a possible surprise attack.

Failing a solution along the lines suggested, I would favour a unilateral withdrawal from NATO. After 1969, when NATO comes up for renewal, there would be little advantage in remaining part of an alliance that could not adapt itself to a changing situation. If the European members of NATO insist on nuclear proliferation, or if America and Russia are still unable to reach an agreement to disarm together, I see no good reason why Britain should remain committed to an alliance that would endanger rather than protect us.

Meanwhile it is to be hoped that the British Government will make its continued membership of NATO (and other regional pacts) conditional on the willingness of its allies to adopt a more flexible approach to disarmament than some of them have done hitherto.

Fortunately there are signs that both the Russians and the Americans have come to understand the perils of a situation in which the cost of a single blunder could be mutual extermination. Unfortunately the American Congress (and to a lesser extent the American press and public opinion) has not yet reached the degree of political-strategic sophistication that President Kennedy bequeathed to his successors. Nor are all of America's allies as enlightened as Britain. Powerful voices are still raised in favour of a continued arms race which would enable America to "prevail." And France (largely due to our own stupidity in the past) is still intent on proliferation.

It is all the more necessary, then, that Britain should give a positive lead to her allies by getting rid of the vestiges of her own deterrent, and by taking the initiative at Geneva and elsewhere in promoting a better understanding with the Soviet and Chinese Governments. As the world's foremost trading nation, we occupy a unique position of which we have not yet taken full advantage because we have allowed ourselves to become subservient to those of our allies from whom we expected favours.

In a situation made fluid by revolutions in weapon-technology, and by the emergence of new nations with new alignments, Britain must adapt the static foreign and defence policies of the past several years in order to keep pace with new developments. Adapt is perhaps too weak a word: we must be prepared to *change* our policies. We can no longer afford the luxury of standing still.

SUMMARY

I have tried to draw a reasonable balance between what I regard as the exaggerated threat of Soviet aggression, and the growing threat of unpremeditated war. As the Soviet Union's growing prosperity diminishes its revolutionary zeal, and while China is still a decade or more away from becoming an effective nuclear Power, it seems absurd to run a growing risk of nuclear catastrophe to counter a threat which even Mr. Dulles regarded as unreal when Stalin was still in power.

But let us assume for a moment that the threat *is* so real that it leads eventually to our domination by the Communists. Would this be the end for Britain? For Civilisation? For Freedom and Democracy? Surely not. At the worst our situation would be the same as that of Poland or Hungary to-day; and nobody supposes that the Poles or Hungarians would welcome a nuclear war as a release from their enslavement. If Western and Christian values are worth dying for, they are even more worth living for. Communism is not immune to the laws of change and decay. Indeed it is changing before our eyes. All tyrannies are survivable. But a nuclear war may *not* be survivable. Western values would be the first to disappear in the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust.

When all is said, human beings are only marginally political. Their joys and sorrows are personal, not ideological. Laughter and tears occur in much the same proportions in Moscow as in Manchester or Minneapolis. This may seem a blasphemy to those on either side who believe that their own particular system is so inherently superior that the world would be well lost in its defence. But nuclear war would be a blasphemy against the whole creation. Mankind can no longer afford the "Better-Dead-than-Red" fanaticisms which have given rise to the Cold War, and of which the Bomb is both a symptom and a cause.

We may comfort ourselves with the reflection that Communist domination is unlikely. Nuclear war is another matter; but even here there are grounds for hope. With intelligence and goodwill we can find a way out of our present difficulties. Our dilemma is man-made. No inexorable Fate draws us to our doom. Given a sense of proportion, a proper understanding of our dangers, and a willingness to overcome them, we shall yet lay the foundations of a safer and saner world. But first we must balance the risks as they are *to-day*, and not cling to policies that were formed in the very different circumstances of the 'Forties and 'Fifties.

GLOSSARY

Hot Line. The radio-telephone link between Washington and Moscow, designed to minimise the risk of purely accidental war.

Tactical nuclears. Relatively small atomic weapons for use on the battlefield. No-one can tell precisely where such weapons cease to be "tactical" and become "strategic." The distinction depends as much on the targets as on the size of the explosion.

Catalysis. The French *force de frappe* is an example. Too small to be effective by itself, it relies for its deterrent value on being able to involve the use of the American deterrent as well.

Escalation. The stage-by-stage enlargement of small wars up to tactical nuclear, and even strategic nuclear, levels.

Massive Retaliation. The threat to answer *any* aggression by the enemy with an all-out nuclear strike against enemy populations.

Counterforce. Restricting one's nuclear strikes to enemy missile bases and other military targets, leaving his cities unharmed. It appears that Counterforce, to be effective, entails the first use of nuclear weapons. There seems little point in hitting at bases from which the enemy missiles have already flown.

Controlled Response. Matching one's own use of weapons as nearly as possible to that of the enemy's in order to avoid escalation.

Conventional options. The ability to achieve one's aims without the use of nuclear weapons.

Multilateral Force (MLF). The proposed fleet of mixed-manned surface ships armed with Polaris missiles. Its total incredibility arises from the fact that it cannot be used without American permission and therefore adds nothing to the American deterrent. But Russia fears it may lead to a German finger on the trigger.

First-strike system. A weapon-system intended for striking first at a potential enemy.

Second-strike system. A more sophisticated system designed to survive an enemy first-strike and retaliate.

Bee-sting (or "Sting-after-death") deterrent. A second-strike force belonging to a smaller Power to deter a nuclear attack from a larger Power. Unfortunately the enemy can never be deterred by such means from a *sub-atomic* attack because its use would be suicidal, and a threat to commit suicide lacks credibility.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Terence Heelas is 46 years old. He stood as a Labour Candidate in the General Election of 1959. Joined CND when it was founded in 1958, and has recently become a founder-member of the CND Disarmament and Strategy Group. He is a member of the Institute for Strategic Studies, and a frequent writer and lecturer on defence matters.