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Paul H. Nitze

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*From Our September 1964 Issue . . .*

## An Address

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Paul H. Nitze

**T**HOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ABOUT TO GRADUATE from the Naval War College are completing a profitable year. Under Admiral [Bernard L.] Austin's [President of the Naval War College, July 1960–July 1964] wise counsel and well-known insistence on academic freedom you have been given more time and better opportunities than most of you have had for years, to improve your knowledge of military and political affairs. The 265 U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard officers in this group have introduced, quite properly for the Naval War College, an emphasis on sea power during the year's deliberations. But the 52 Army, Air Force, and civilian members have, I am informed, supplied important broadening and have served to keep the sailors honest. The presence upon this campus of 27 officers from the navies of our allies has served a highly beneficial purpose in advancing your collective studies and associations.

Being familiar with the general conduct of your studies here, knowing that you are all fresh from the solution of the world's problems as a result of your recent Global Strategy week, realizing that your final days have been filled with farewell parties and thoughts of forthcoming vacations or tours of duty, I have

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The Honorable Paul H. Nitze, born in 1907, graduated cum laude from Harvard University in 1928. From 1944 to 1946 he served as vice chairman of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, for which he was awarded the Medal of Merit by President Truman. From 1946 to 1953 Mr. Nitze served with the Department of State, and in 1961 he was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs). He became the fifty-seventh Secretary of the Navy on 29 November 1963, serving until 1 September 1967.

Professor Nitze is now Diplomat-in-Residence and Distinguished Research Professor of Strategic Studies and American Foreign Policy at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

These remarks were delivered as a commencement address at the Naval War College on 17 June 1964.

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decided to seek to hold your attention, and to enjoy the temporary freedom which my presence on this stage permits, by discussing the distant future.

I have calculated, roughly, that members of these classes will still be on active duty, as flag and general officers, in 1990. The large majority of these classes will exercise positions of top leadership in the seventies and eighties. Let us consider briefly this morning the nature of some of the problems you will face. In a sense, perhaps, we should consider this a stewardship report from the leadership of the sixties to the potential leaders of the seventies and eighties. The communists have a method of creating history by projecting the present backward. I shall endeavor not to create the future by projecting my problems forward, but merely to try to speculate with you on how the strengths and weaknesses of the present, interwoven with trends in world events, may present themselves to you in the seventies and eighties.

### **Central War**

First, let us consider the possible central or strategic nuclear war of the seventies and eighties.

Three fundamental facets must be dealt with here: the likely development of our own strategic deterrent forces; the likely development of efforts to meet our major adversaries' strategic forces; and the proliferation in the number of national strategic nuclear forces.

During the years of your leadership, improvements in technology will provide the U.S. with strategic nuclear delivery systems of unlimited range and pinpoint accuracy. The United States will be able, as a result of developments this generation has already set in train, to make the decision to base increasingly larger percentages of its strategic forces at sea, thus increasing their invulnerability and reducing the temptation of an enemy to strike our homeland in a counterforce attack. This development becomes possible as the result of our ability to place a much heavier warhead, controlled with much greater accuracy, into our remarkable Polaris weapons system, and systems which will follow.

At the same time, we have to recognize that at least one potential enemy, during the generation of your leadership, will have achieved a highly sophisticated, technological, industrial base and will undoubtedly have the capability to place both land-based and sea-based missiles with great accuracy upon U.S. targets. This means that you will have a much more complex problem than the present leadership has had in determining ways to limit damage to the United States. You will have to adopt the concept of a total continental approach to the defense of the U.S. homeland. You will be faced with increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons which will have penetration aids and great accuracy and increased megatonnage. You will have to learn to bring the entire resources of

the nation together into an integrated approach to damage limitation. You will have to analyze the contribution to a single national defense system of its various component parts. Civil defense, antiballistic missile defense, bomber defense, antisubmarine defense, and even the contribution that we can make toward reducing damage to the United States by moving ICBMs to sea must be evaluated. In the future, a proper determination of the mix must include not only the traditional force level computations, but also the expenditures necessary for such interrelated programs as civil defense. We of the present era have just begun the assault on the extremely difficult questions involved. You will have to accelerate these efforts. That large majority of you who wear naval uniforms will be faced with a major aspect of this analysis—the proper contribution of the Navy's antisubmarine forces to the defense of the homeland through containment of missile-launching submarines. Although the present generation has been able to hold forth the positive advantage of a relatively invulnerable submarine-based deterrent of its own, we have not yet made the progress in antisubmarine warfare, or ASW, that would be necessary for me to report optimistically to you about your future problems in this area. We are reorganizing our resources, manpower, and management techniques to provide effective concentration on this problem. But I am confident that it will remain a very great challenge indeed to those of you charged with naval leadership in the seventies and eighties. The degree of your success in meeting any potential enemy submarine missile threat will, of course, have a direct impact upon the question of what forces it will be intelligent to build for other programs.

The third major problem area in central war which will concern the future leadership is the likelihood of continuing proliferation of national nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The day may come when you will decide in retrospect that in my generation we had never had it so good. We have been faced with the prospect of mortal continental damage from only one major adversary. Within the next 20 years, in the absence of a preventive arrangement, Communist China will undoubtedly acquire nuclear warheads and the means to deliver them with reasonable accuracy. This is a prospect to which neither the Soviet Union nor the United States can look forward with comfort. As the nuclear weapons systems of Communist China become more sophisticated, both nations will be forced to revise their strategic plans to take into account this increasing capability. Moreover, the acquisition of nuclear weapons systems by Communist China will encourage other countries to acquire them. It is possible that some 15 to 20 nations will have the capabilities to build nuclear weapons in the seventies and eighties.

Enlightened leadership on your part must seek to provide ways to lessen the dangers inherent in such a prospect. One technique to inhibit the proliferation of nuclear weapons will be to offer the support of the U.S. strategic umbrella

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as a guarantee to those countries who, fearing themselves threatened by Communist China, might otherwise feel compelled to acquire nuclear weapons. Still another variant of this approach, which you will have to consider, is the extension of multilateral force arrangements to other regional associations. Success of the present generation in initiating the Nato MLF [Multilateral Force] in the sixties would be a large determinant in future decisions regarding development of similar systems. The key problem is to bridge the conflict between sovereign aspirations for control of nuclear weapons and the collective need for regional control of extremely expensive weapons capable of inflicting such severe damage.

### Noncentral War

Next, let us visualize the seventies and eighties in terms of noncentral war. Without in any sense endeavoring to be all-inclusive, let me report my view that two of the conflict situations which you may encounter in that era would be, first, a war at sea with our major adversary, and second, a limited conventional war without direct Soviet participation. In these years, the U.S.S.R. will have achieved a standard of living close to that now enjoyed by the United States. Our European allies will have continued to prosper. It is difficult to visualize either side, as a rational act, permitting the escalation of political problems to a major war in Europe, with all that such action would imply. Rather, it seems possible that a proper response to harassment in Europe would be a limited blockade at sea and that this in turn might lead to limited war at sea. In such a war, the major role would be played by our ASW forces and a lesser role by our anti-air warfare forces.

As I look at this limited war at sea, I must report the same sense of urgency with regard to ASW that I expressed in discussing the ASW aspect of central war. Reaction time is less crucial in this case than in our endeavors to prevent the launching of missiles upon our homeland; nevertheless, similar technical difficulties limit our prospects. This generation has not yet reduced to manageable proportions the problem of the opacity of the seas. Submarines are detected only with great difficulty and with large expenditures of forces. Nevertheless, I can report that this generation is passing on to you one very remarkable advantage: the fact that the North Atlantic littoral is composed entirely of free nations. Any potential aggressor must send his submarines through straits and passages that are susceptible to mining and patrolling. We can, therefore, expect that this geographical advantage would exact very great attrition upon enemy submarines in a limited war at sea. Your problems in the seventies and eighties will be appreciably lessened if you can maintain the success of the present era in preserving the North Atlantic as a community lake.

An important contribution to the ASW problem in this Atlantic community lake, and indeed in all oceans, will be to project a system for total surveillance, reconnaissance, and reporting of the ocean areas. I am confident that before the seventies are over, this nation will be able to keep accurate and up-to-date plots of the position of every ship that moves upon the oceans. This in itself will make much easier the job of identifying unknown contacts. Moreover, in your era, as the result of our recent decision to expand our research in deep ocean areas, we shall know much more about the deep water and its underwater terrain, and we shall have the capability to plumb these deep ocean areas.

The second major possibility—the likelihood of involvement in a limited war without direct Soviet participation—could come about in a number of locations throughout the world. In Asia the Chinese Communists might participate either overtly or covertly. In the entire Pacific, as in the Atlantic, enemy submarines will represent a serious hazard. Here again, the present era will bequeath remarkable geographical circumstances to you. The United States and her allies hold key positions throughout the entire island chain of the northern and western Pacific off the Asian coast. Other areas of possible limited war are remote from Soviet and Chinese territory, and moreover are separated therefrom by the oceans which we control. These are geographic factors which you can utilize to maximum advantage.

You will have to meet this threat of limited war by maintaining the capability to project power ashore from the sea. My generation will, despite our ASW difficulties, have provided you with some remarkable tools for this task. By the early seventies this nation will have acquired the capability to mount out and deliver, wherever required, up to two divisions of Marines in 20-knot assault amphibious shipping. You will be able to deliver these troops by new and improved techniques of horizontal and vertical envelopment, designed to meet the possibility of escalation from conventional to nuclear weapons. These assault troops will be preceded by greatly improved carrier striking forces, including, in my judgment, additional nuclear-powered attack carriers. These and the conventionally powered attack carriers will be capable of maintaining an improved anti-air war environment in sea areas of importance to us. This defense will stem from the presence on board our task force ships of two very powerful weapons systems. On the one hand, there will be surface-to-air missiles, both the greatly improved Terrier, Tartar, and Talos series, and a new advanced missile, developed from the technology acquired in improving the 3 Ts. On the other hand, we will have on board our carriers the extremely long-range, highly effective F-111B fighter aircraft and Phoenix missile weapons system. We shall also have delivered to you in large numbers our new A-7A attack aircraft, which, with its very satisfactory payload radius, will be capable of projecting U.S. carrier air power over 90 percent of the non-Soviet land area of the world. Our

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amphibious and carrier striking forces should be fully competent to meet the limited war threat of your generation. In these areas, we have served you well.

### **Cold War**

Let me discuss now very briefly a few key aspects of the cold war as you are likely to find it in the seventies. There is little doubt in my mind that the nationalist orientation of the communist movements in both the Soviet Union and Communist China will continue to create rivalry between them. As the Communist Chinese acquire their nuclear weapons and improve their industrial base, we can expect the competition between these two within the Communist bloc and within the noncommitted nations to continue. This will make the job of the United States, in seeking to maintain its influence and the preservation of free world concepts, more diffuse and complex. I believe it is likely that we shall see a checkerboard pattern of influence emerging within the less developed nations. The Soviet Union presently has one checker on that board in Cuba. The Communist Chinese have been trying to acquire such a checker in Zanzibar.

In the present era, the influence and presence of the United States and her allies have been predominant throughout most of the world. The difficult question to answer is the extent to which this influence will be passed on to you intact. Clearly, the outcome depends upon the wisdom and forthrightness of our policies in the years ahead.

This administration has done a great deal in recent years to strengthen our influence and to uphold our world-wide commitments. The sum of the pluses and minuses, of which I have spoken with regard to central and noncentral war, indicates to me that the prospects are relatively good. Let me discuss some specifics. First, it is very important for the Free World, always in its democratic and, therefore, sometimes relatively inefficient fashion, to encourage closer associations among its allies in the several regions of the world. We have made strong efforts to maintain and strengthen such ties with our Nato allies, with the OAS [Organization of American States], and with SEATO [Southeast Asia Treaty Organization] and CENTO [Central Treaty Organization]. The ways in which we seek to strengthen such ties are too numerous to recite. One obvious and very effective method is the increasing crosstraining of military officers which goes on. The 27 members of the navies of our allies who are present here today are one very concrete demonstration of the efficacy of this program. I might also report my great pleasure that your beloved President, Admiral Austin, has consented to remain on active duty at the completion of his normal career, as Chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board. In your era of leadership, you will, I am sure, find greatly improved opportunities to capitalize

on the ties that unite military men of all nations. Indeed, the very friendships that have been made here among the distinguished representatives of several navies will serve to enhance these opportunities.

The encouragement of these regional associations portends greater opportunities than just the economic or military association which results. The existence of such organizations has already made it possible to strengthen the concept of international order and stability in concrete fashion. During the Cuban missile crisis, for example, it was the Organization of American States, acting as a regional association under the authority of the United Nations Charter, which voted for surveillance of Cuba to prove that a violation of the accepted concept of world order and stability had occurred. It was this same organization which authorized the establishment of a quarantine around Cuba to enforce the corporate will that the status quo ante must be restored. My generation has merely begun the development of new concepts of this type. It is your generation, under the pressure of, unfortunately, more complex weapons systems and many more sources of dangerous national power, which must improve and project these concepts to ensure that the destruction of civilization is avoided.

### Conclusion

Having rendered this brief inventory of the problems and the strengths you will inherit from the present, I am aware that I am as unable as anyone else to predict the outcome of your stewardship. But I am conscious of the fact that the United States and her allies will be passing on to you from the present era great resources in wealth, power, and, most important, in the viability of a democratic way of life. I am confident that the year you have spent here has served to enlarge your horizons, and to improve your thought processes and your ability to analyze the complex problems of which I have spoken. You have passed the middle points of your respective careers. Before coming here you had been educated in depth in certain relatively narrow areas of your respective services. This year has given you the base from which to expand into the broad-gauge, analytical, thoughtful leadership positions of the second halves of your careers. I am confident that we are passing on to you sufficient problems to provide a stimulating future. I am confident that you will continue to grow and to learn in order to meet the challenge of those years.

Best of luck.

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