

1984

## The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy

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and on-site inspection of weapons systems; or it can be sanctioned, permitting surveillance and other means of information collection. The more open the communication, the more confidence each side can have in the intentions and capabilities of the other. From the discussions of crisis stability and the history of arms control in the remainder of the book, one can make a strong case for why communications with the Soviet Union are unlikely to improve and why confidence-building measures are so fragile as to have no lasting effect.

The author conveys the fear and frustration of the nuclear protest group and argues for a nuclear freeze, no first use, and so on down the agenda. But the arguments are unconvincing precisely because the author admittedly falls back on faith and does not offer solutions to the principal dilemma; opening up the Soviet Union and bringing it into the community of nations. I was pleasantly surprised to find the author stating, "If there were easy solutions, we would have taken them by now." Though the author sees the problem of nuclear arms as acute, he offers no short-term solution—only a first step and hope.

I could not help but conclude that the author was incorrect in his primary thesis. This is indeed a subject for experts. The book skips along the surface of a wide range of issues and convinces the reader that serious study is required to have a truly informed opinion. Anyone who could reasonably argue all of the

facets of the nuclear policy would be considered fairly expert. However, the author reserves the term "expert" for one who knows how to calculate the cost effectiveness of nuclear weapons and in doing so reflects a peculiarly Yale judgment that one who understands nuclear weapons effects must not understand the social, political, and economic aspects of current nuclear policy. Overall, the author does succeed in making the case that democracy demands an informed public, and he has contributed a very readable introduction to the complex issues of nuclear arms.

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Freedman, Lawrence. *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. 473pp. \$10.95

Kaplan, Fred. *The Wizards of Armageddon*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983. 452pp. \$18.95

Lefever, Ernest W. and Hunt, E. Stephen, eds. *The Apocalyptic Premise: Nuclear Arms Debated*, Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1982. 429pp. \$14 paper \$9

The ground swell of public interest in nuclear weapons, their use, control or elimination, stimulated a flood of activity in the bookstalls, with at least three dozen new volumes coming off the presses this year. These are three of the best. Lawrence Freedman, professor of war studies at the University of London, and Fred Kaplan, an American journalist,

are less concerned about where nuclear arms are taking us than about how we got where we are. Ernest Lefever and Stephen Hunt, both prominent in the field of ethics and public policy, offer thirty-one selections reflecting a wide range of views on nuclear arms policy by political activists, religious leaders, government authorities, scholars, and policy experts. The three books together offer an excellent guide for strategy making.

Freedman and Kaplan both look back to the origins of nuclear war, and both give credit to Bernard Brodie for pioneering concepts of nuclear strategy around the principle that the purpose of the military establishment is no longer to win wars but to avert them. Theorizing on how best to avoid nuclear war soon produced the alternative of how to fight, and perhaps win, one. The debate between the deterrers and the warfighters has been with us ever since. Perhaps the most original contribution by either side came from the polemicists who sort out the debaters as the MAD men (for mutual assured destruction) and the NUTS (for nuclear use theorists).

When Bernard Brodie joined the Air Force planning staff as a consultant in 1948, he embodied the intellectual split between the deterrers and the warfighters. Earlier Brodie had supported, as a means of keeping nuclear war limited, the idea of both sides targeting only military facilities, deliberately avoiding cities. When he determined that up to two million civilians would still be killed

in a "counterforce" war, he abandoned this idea, then joined the Rand think tank where other scholars were investigating similar alternatives to Armageddon. The development of the hydrogen bomb shocked Brodie and other scholars. A purely counterforce strike was then defined as one killing *only* two million civilians and Brodie thought that strategy had reached a dead end. His interests shifted to attempts to keep nuclear war limited, which seemed hardly likely; he left Rand in 1966 to return to teaching and further study the psychological causes of war.

Both Freedman and Kaplan develop the intellectual history of nuclear war through the eyes of the strategists themselves. Freedman's thesis is that nuclear strategy is cyclical and repetitive. "Much of what is offered today as a profound and new insight was said yesterday; and usually in a more concise and literate manner." Kaplan sees their world as excessively narrow, operationally naive, dominated by military hardware where capability equates to intent. The warfighters and deterrers, arms controllers and first strikers, the counterforce, counter-value, or conventional responders are carefully analyzed to show strengths and weaknesses and the overall fragility of the body of theory itself.

What differences have the nuclear strategists really made? Secretaries of Defense other than James Schlesinger have read few books about nuclear strategy before taking office, their decisions in office more often

than not followed political or technological imperatives of the moment. Think tank advice from organizations such as Rand supports service dogmas. Offered on a paid and privileged basis, is it or can it be compatible with the integrity of decent scholarship? Brodie had serious reservations about the whole concept of nuclear war. Because officials "will not pay for unfriendly advice (twice)," he was never popular with Air Force officers with whom he had to work. It is at this point that the apocalyptic debate of Lefever and Hunt may be of greatest utility in suggesting alternatives.

Lefever and Hunt believe that quality of the current debate on nuclear arms on both sides of the Atlantic is marred by simplistic slogans, doubletalk, misplaced fears and distorted statistics; it has hardly served the long term objective of "peace with freedom and justice." The 31 essays represent a wide variety of sources and diverse views, and are never far from the moral and ethical aspects of atomic warfare. Part One offers an excellent discussion of arms control issues, US-Europe oriented, with sound views from both sides of the Atlantic. The peace movement is developed in Part Two, including several fine selections on Soviet manipulation of peace sentiments in the West and the "Active Measures" by the KGB seeking to separate the United States from its European allies. Part Three, "The Apocalyptic Premise," offers a platform for the prophets of doom like Jonathan Schell, and after doom

like Herman Kahn, Michael Kinsley, and Jack Greene. Part Four, "The Churches and Modern Arms," covers succinctly the current issues raised by both Catholic and Protestant clergy and the burden on government officials to choose between their consciences as illuminated by church teachings, and their professional careers and commitments. Pundit George Will claims that the technology of modern arms "has driven us to a deterrence policy based on a practice that was once universally condemned, holding enemy civilian populations as hostages." But even before Hiroshima, he adds, injuries inflicted on noncombatants were not just collateral effects of war; they were "deliberate results, on a vast scale, of tactics tailored to conventional weapons." Part Five offers the official views, United States, Soviet and British, for control of armaments. A highly useful "focus" precedes each of the essays and an excellent bibliography corresponding to the five sections of the text offers an excellent guide for further study.

The professional officer, whatever his particular bent, will find in these books a splendid study guide, first in reviewing the limitations on nuclear strategies developed by past experts in the field, and second, the limitations on future strategies placed by moral and ethical constraints on public policy. From both, far better concepts of nuclear strategy should certainly emerge.

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