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President's Notes

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PRESIDENT'S NOTES

During the past year we have heard a swelling of voices raised in protest against nuclear weapons. These voices have echoed through Europe and have been joined in strident chorus by a growing number of voices within the United States. Many of these voices come from people who are genuinely concerned about the prospect of nuclear war and the concomitant effects of such a war upon the world in which we live. One of the major voices has been that of the American clergy.

A number of clergymen of a particular faith have spoken out on the immorality of the use of, or the threat to use, nuclear weapons. They hold that: it is immoral to use the (strategic) nuclear arsenal of the United States; it is immoral to make declarations of the intent to use the (strategic) nuclear forces of the United States; but, mere possession of the strategic arsenal as a deterrent is morally neutral, i.e., there is no objection to the *possession* of nuclear weapons while arms control negotiations proceed (while foreswearing any use of or threat to use nuclear weapons). This latter point has a subtlety which many, including the Soviet Union, will find difficult to grasp. The corollary to this proposition is that military officers who participate in planning for the use of nuclear weapons or who are associated with the employment of nuclear weapons cannot morally belong to the faith of those espousing this proposition.

Because a number of students had voiced concern over the ongoing debate and its implications for military officers, we recently spent an afternoon at the Naval War College listening to a panel of distinguished clergy and laymen present their views on the question of the morality of nuclear deterrence. The majority did not share the views of the spokesman for the extreme view, but emphasized the need for curbing the arms race through arms control, pointing out that a strategy of nuclear deterrence was morally tolerable; not satisfactory, but tolerable.

Fortunately, there was also a recognition of the need to defend one's country and home against aggression in any form. Our students, who participated on a voluntary basis, questioned the panel at length. At the end of the session, many questions remained and, while no solutions were reached, it was a good airing of a timely and sensitive question.

This debate was, in microcosm, a reflection of the enigma of nuclear weapons. The genie is indeed out of the bottle and the practicality of stuffing it back in the bottle is extremely remote under current conditions of the super-power relationship.

I have talked with a number of people who oppose reliance on nuclear weapons in any form. Unfortunately,

2 Naval War College Review

these discussions have not been marked by any proposed solutions which bear any reasonable prospect of attainment.

Several points, which often appear to be swept under the rug in the emotional nuclear debate, should be borne in mind:

1. The U.S. military is as acutely aware (perhaps more so) of the potential damage of the employment of nuclear weapons as are other concerned Americans.

2. It does take two to tango in the macabre world of arms control. Unless we can negotiate from a position of adequate strength, very little incentive to negotiate is offered to the other side. And, most importantly, unless the basic approach of the Soviet Union to real arms control changes radically, very little of substance can be expected to emerge from arms control negotiations.

3. Cosmetic agreements for the sake of agreements themselves hurt more than they help. Significant cuts, particularly in the area of fixed land-based strategic ballistic missiles, should be the primary goal of both sides.

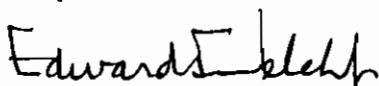
4. Any agreement must be equitable and verifiable. While this may appear

simplistic, it is the bedrock of any arms control agreement. Adequate verification may be increasingly difficult to attain several decades hence.

5. Arms control efforts must be woven into the whole fabric of national security policy. This has not been so in the past.

6. Arms control efforts must be undertaken in close coordination and consultation with our allies. After-the-fact consultation can only generate distrust and lack of solidarity.

I have lived in the arcane world of arms control for a number of years and have experienced both its frustrations and its hopes. We all want a more secure and peaceful world. We do need to be mindful of John F. Kennedy's caution that negotiations "are not a substitute for strength—they are an instrument for the translation of strength into survival and peace."



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