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War and the Quest for Peace

*The world was divided into two parties which were trying to destroy each other because they both wanted the same thing, the liberation of the oppressed, the abolition of violence, and the establishment of a lasting peace.**

THERMONUCLEAR POWER

The problem of war in the thermonuclear age is one of the most urgent of the moral questions facing modern persons. The problem is incredibly complicated, and persons of intelligence and understanding hold different positions in part because of our inability to predict the future with any certainty. As we saw in the last chapter, the control and use of energy is much more than a scientific issue. When we have the power to use energy, particularly nuclear energy, deliberately against those we call our enemies, we face a moral and human problem of the first order. Decisions regarding its use will affect social, political, and economic relationships and may well determine the course of history and the fate of all mankind.

Weapons of Destruction

A single twenty-megaton H-bomb is said to deliver "more explosive power than that of all the weapons used by all nations for all purposes during all the years of World War II."¹ We are told that one of the thermonuclear or hydrogen bombs could destroy any city in existence. In addition to complete destruction over something like a hundred square miles, the radioactive fallout might settle on an area of many thousands of square miles and make it uninhabitable for a considerable time. We have moved in a few

*Hermann Hesse, "If the War Goes On Another Two Years," in *Little Victories, Big Defeats*, compiled by Georgess McHargue (New York: Dell, 1974), p. 4

¹David Rittenhouse Inglis, "The Nature of Nuclear War," in *Nuclear Weapons and the Conflict of Conscience*, ed. John C. Bennett (New York: Scribners, 1962), p. 43

decades from a condition of power scarcity to a condition of power surplus and potential overkill. The United States and the Soviet Union have between them 14,000 strategic nuclear warheads, enough to destroy every city in the world seven times over.² Weapons of destruction have piled up so fast that the balance-of-power principle of the last century has been replaced by a balance-of-terror strategy, in which the threat of massive retaliation and total annihilation is stressed as a deterrence to enemy attack. The United States could currently destroy the Soviet Union many times over with its present arsenal of weapons, even if it were attacked first.

In addition to the armaments in the two superpowers, there has been a massive buildup of weapons of destruction among the smaller nations, each of which wants its own nuclear stockpile as a defense against the nuclear weaponry of other countries. Among these smaller states it is estimated that there are 500 additional nuclear weapons.³ The spread of weapons to many different nations increases the risk that one or more of them will accidentally or purposely set off a chain-reaction war. A limited conflict between nonsuper powers might easily get out of hand: one nation, fearing for its very survival, might unleash a nuclear attack. A superpower might feel compelled, should its client state suffer severely on a conventional battlefield, to use nuclear weapons to save the situation.

Beyond even the dangers of escalating a limited war into all-out nuclear confrontation, there are the equally terrifying dangers of a nuclear war breaking out by (1) accident, through failure or mistake of some official or mechanism, or even by a strategically placed official who becomes nervous and loses his head; (2) by miscalculation, when one side in a dispute misjudges the point at which the other side would take a stand, refuses to be pushed further, and uses any and every means to defend national interests; and (3) by blackmail or terrorism, in which a fanatical group holds the world hostage to nuclear detonation to gain a political end. (A recent bestseller created a fictional story of the placing of a thermonuclear bomb in New York City by a leader of a small nation to force the United States to recognize a Palestinian state.)

WAR AS AN ANACHRONISM

The underpinnings of logic that have served historically to justify resort to war as the lesser of several evils have shifted or, in their traditional form, quite disappeared. Victory has been deprived of its historical meaning in total war with the new weapons, for the "victor" is likely to sustain such devastation as to lack the means of imposing his will upon the "vanquished."

²Ruth Leger Sivard, "Social Costs and the Arms Race," *The Nation* (June 17, 1978), p. 731.

³Sivard, p. 731.

And yet to accomplish this end . . . is the rational motive of war. Democratic participation or consent in a war decision is rendered most unmeaningful at the very time popular involvement in the devastation of war has reached an unprecedented maximum.

The history of war and man's attitudes about it should be reexamined in the light of these developments. . . . Such investigation might reveal how military planning became divorced from political planning and war became an end in itself rather than a means of achieving more or less rational political ends. . . .

That mankind should have carried the values and precepts of the age of firearms into the thermonuclear age represents a far greater anachronism than the one represented by his carrying the values and precepts of the age of chivalry into the age of firearms. Anachronisms are preeminently the business of historians. . . . Lacking a Cervantes, historians might with their own methods help to expose what may well be the most perilous anachronism in history.

C. Vann Woodward, "The Age of Reinterpretation," in *The Debate Over Thermonuclear Strategy*, ed. Arthur I. Waskow (Boston: Heath, 1965), p. 9.

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"JUST WAR" THEORY

The horrors of nuclear war, with its potential for unlimited destruction around the globe, must be set against the background of war as a traditional way of resolving disputes between groups of people, from kinship groups to nations. Wars have been fought using stones, clubs, spears, and bows as well as with swords, rifles, tanks, and conventional bombs.

Moral Criteria

War has been such a common recourse throughout human history that even the religious traditions of the West have produced sophisticated ar-

guments on its behalf. The most important of these defenses of war invoke a crucial distinction between a just and an unjust war. Certain moral criteria must be met if a war is to be regarded as just and an individual regarded as obligated to fight if called. In the medieval period, for a war to be just, three general conditions had to be met: (1) a legitimate authority must declare the war, (2) it must be fought for a just cause, and (3) the means must be proportional to the end, that is, the good the war will achieve must outweigh the evil it will also produce.

More recently, these three points have been expanded into seven by Joseph McKenna.⁴ He believes a just war must meet the following conditions: (1) it must be declared by recognized authority, (2) the seriousness of the injury suffered by the enemy must be proportional to the damage suffered by the other side, (3) the harm inflicted on the aggressor must be real and immediate, (4) there must be a reasonable chance of winning the conflict, (5) war must be a last resort to resolving the dispute, (6) the participants must have morally laudable intentions, and (7) the means employed to wage the war must be moral.

A crucial assumption made by just war theories is that each nation or sovereign state is justified in defending itself from attack against its borders or vital interests. It has also been traditionally assumed that wars between nation-states will affect only the entities directly involved and only those who are officially designated as and prepared to be combatants.

Does the "Just War" Justify Too Much?

Some moral philosophers are now arguing that these assumptions are no longer valid and that it is now virtually impossible to meet the seven conditions for a just war listed above. Donald A. Wells in particular has examined each of the seven conditions in the light of modern nuclear war and found them wanting.⁵ With respect to the war being declared by a duly constituted authority, he points out that this criterion does not distinguish morally between one authority and the next. Hitler was a duly constituted authority as were Idi Amin and Josef Stalin. Is any war they declare therefore just? Was the United States' participation in the Vietnam War unjust inasmuch as it was never officially declared by the president? Why should the decision to wage war be left to an individual about whose wisdom or moral values we are not required to make a judgment?

With respect to the proportionality of violence used by the enemy determining the degree of violence used by the other side, Wells argues that

⁴Joseph McKenna, "Ethics and War: A Catholic View," *American Political Science Review* (September 1960), pp. 647-658.

⁵Donald A. Wells, "The 'Just War' Justifies Too Much," in *Religion for a New Generation*, 2nd ed., eds. Jacob Needleman, A. K. Bierman, and James A. Gould (New York: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 346-358.

in modern war it is impossible to determine what is a just proportion of violence. Is the bombing of civilians (at Hiroshima and Nagasaki) justified in proportion to the potential loss of soldiery if the war was prolonged or in proportion to the American lives already lost? Is the threat to the American way of life so great that it would justify the annihilation of all its communistic opponents? Ernest W. Lefever has claimed that genetic damage from a nuclear war, which might affect 20 percent of the world's population, "is well within the range of what a civilized society is prepared to tolerate." To refrain from using nuclear war when the alternative is communist enslavement is morally unacceptable and thus justifies resort to war. "A policy designed to save ten thousand persons from possible future death by radioactivity, which had the actual effect of inviting the death of ten million persons or the enslavement of a hundred million persons today, could hardly be called morally responsible or politically wise."⁶

Wells' rebuttal to Lefever would be that if the proportionality criterion is so flexible that it does not exclude a Hiroshima or nuclear mega-death, then it fails to differentiate justifiable use of violence from unjustifiable. It begs the question of whether any conceivable scale of violence would be unacceptable as long as the offended party feels its values and interests are of paramount importance and will be seriously undermined by a victory by the enemy. "Unless some case could be made that the modern values are infinitely more worthy than medieval values, the immense increase in human destruction that our wars now involve makes proportionality absolutely inapplicable."⁷

With respect to war as a last resort, Wells points out that "to permit war as a last resort is not the same as requiring that the last resort be taken."⁸ If modern war necessarily means the death of millions of persons, most of whom will be noncombatants, why is it justified to resort to it at all? Are there any causes so inherently virtuous that their defence would justify the kind of massive annihilation or long-term genetic damage modern nuclear war would create? If war of this kind could be justified, would it also be possible to talk about justifiable genocide or justifiable murder of children? In other words, given the massive destruction of modern war, what values are so supreme and important that they justify resort to war in any case?

This question is directly related to the condition that a just war must be fought with the right intentions. Certainly the preservation of a nation-state could not, in and of itself, justify resort to war. Are all nation-states equally virtuous? Wells asks, "Is the preservation of the state so incontrovertibly significant that the resort to war to save it is always an act of

⁶Ernest W. Lefever, "Facts, Calculation, and Political Ethics," *The Moral Dilemma of Nuclear Weapons: Essays from Worldview* (New York: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1961), pp. 41-43

⁷Wells, in Needleman, et al., p. 351

⁸Wells, in Needleman, et al., p. 352

right intention?"⁹ In a modern nuclear war, one might not directly intend to kill noncombatants, but the weaponry used is known ahead of time to be such that it cannot but help kill them. A soldier whose arrow kills an innocent bystander could be excused because he didn't know or intend what would happen. The decision to employ nuclear destruction on an enemy city is made in full knowledge and therefore with the intention of destroying all its inhabitants.

Wells concludes his analysis by arguing that the theory of the just war justifies too much. As long as nation-states have an unqualified right to survival, "given that the state is more important than the individual, indeed, that the state is more important than an infinite number of individuals, mere human death will never be a significant argument against war."¹⁰ Those who wish to oppose the resort to war, especially nuclear war, will have to establish the superiority of values other than national interest or preservation of a particular way of life.

Surrender as a Moral Option?

If the value of life itself or the preservation of human beings who can still struggle to make life meaningful is a more important value than annihilating millions to preserve national interest, then it becomes possible to consider surrender to a foreign power as a moral alternative to war. Although surrender has been traditionally unthinkable for many persons, those who advocate it in the nuclear age point out that it would not only avoid nuclear destruction but would permit the humanizing or tempering of an oppressor's system of control. Even totalitarian dictatorships have changed over time, especially as they have extended their power over many diverse countries. Although no one would want to minimize the short-run effects of living under a brutal dictatorship, the long-run possibilities for change could still justify surrender rather than resort to all-out nuclear war.

OBSTACLES TO PEACE

Innate Aggression

These considerations, according to some, overlook basic facts of human nature as well as the interests that are served by a military posture that depends on the threat of war. One such fact, it is claimed, is that war is naturally caused by an innate, aggressive instinct in humans and that it will

⁹Wells, in Needleman, et al , p. 354

¹⁰Wells, in Needleman, et al., p 358.

continue unless the instinct is redirected or sublimated. This view has been developed recently by Robert Ardrey and Konrad Lorenz.¹¹ Although both men recognize the elements of learning and adjustment to conditions, they believe that the instinctive drive is the most important factor. This thesis has been vigorously challenged and refuted by various anthropologists, zoologists, and other scientists¹² who point out that human beings adapt to their group's traditional way of life and that warlike behavior is the product of the institutions and the history to which the individuals have been conditioned.

The Necessity of Deterrence

Even if one were to discount the claim that war is inevitable because human beings are innately aggressive, it would be harder to reject the insistence that aggressors, nevertheless, must be deterred. While disclaiming any intention to initiate an armed conflict, proponents of some kind of minimal deterrence capability point out that in the absence of deterrence conquest through arms becomes too tempting to resist. They argue that each nation must have enough arms to convince a potential aggressor that, should it initiate conflict, it would suffer more damage than would be acceptable. Disarmament should never be carried so far that deterrence is undermined. As Thomas C. Schelling puts it, "If disarmament is to work, it has got to improve deterrence and to stabilize deterrence. Until a much greater community of interest exists in the world than is likely in this generation, war will have to be made unprofitable. It cannot be made impossible."¹³ If Schelling is correct, then peace should not be sought necessarily through arms reduction. It might even be prudent to build up one's arsenal with increasingly deadlier weapons so as to maximize one's deterrent force. "If the consequences of transgression are plainly bad—bad for all parties, and little dependent on who transgresses first—we can take the consequences for granted and call it a 'balance of prudence.'"¹⁴

Successful deterrence depends, of course, on each side being able to maintain unswerving commitment to peace on the one hand while conceiving deadlier and more effective weapons of destruction on the other. It also assumes that each nation will know when it has reached the minimal level of deterrence necessary for security and will be committed to stopping at just that point. The calculus of deterrence cannot allow too much room for the possibility that energetically pursuing deterrent capability might trigger an accidental release of arms.

¹¹Robert Ardrey, *The Territorial Imperative* (New York: Atheneum, 1966); Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression* (New York: Harcourt, 1966).

¹²See M. F. Ashley Montagu, ed. *Man and Aggression* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968).

¹³Thomas C. Schelling, "The Role of Deterrence in Total Disarmament," in *The Debate Over Thermonuclear Strategy*, ed. Arthur I. Waskow (Boston: Heath, 1965), p. 99.

¹⁴Schelling, in Waskow, p. 99.

The Military-Industrial Complex

One factor often overlooked in moral consideration of obstacles to peace is the enormous investment in war and war preparation of many thousands of persons and businesses. Large sections of the population have a vested interest in a military economy—the big corporations with billion dollar contracts for weapons, the big unions with large numbers of workers in defense plants, and the great number of persons trained in the arts of war. More than two hundred retired officers, including more than a score of generals and admirals, are reported to be on the payroll of one large aircraft corporation. Military men sit on the highest councils of state and have a powerful influence on Congress and on foreign policy.

In his farewell address to the nation when leaving the presidency, Dwight D. Eisenhower, a former general, warned the nation about the dangers of the military-industrial complex. (Some would now add the academic community since many of its researchers are doing work with military implications and are funded by the federal government.) Eisenhower pointed out that in a state of military insecurity, “there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties.”¹⁵ When that action directly contributes to the profits of major industrial firms and enhances the prestige and employment of people in the military, there is the danger, Eisenhower warned, of abuse of power.

Given the enormous complexity of much military equipment and the secrecy that must surround its details in the name of national security, it becomes difficult for someone in Congress, let alone a citizen without specialized knowledge, to know how to raise critical questions about the need for what the military requests. The propriety of asking such questions is further suspect when the request carries with it overtones of military defense against our enemies as well as economic benefit to thousands of persons. The result, as Eisenhower anticipated, has often been the purchase of weapons systems that are obsolete almost as soon as they are off the assembly line and are often incapable of meeting the standards set for them. Senator William Proxmire has argued before the United States Senate that:

[W]e are paying far too much for the military hardware we buy . . . and perhaps even more shocking, we often do not get the weapons and products we pay the excessive prices for. . . . Of eleven major weapons systems begun during the 1960s, only two of the eleven electronic components of them performed up to standard. [Proxmire added that these systems] typically cost 200 to 300 percent more than the Pentagon estimated. They were and are delivered two years later

¹⁵Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American People, January 17, 1961,” Parts III-IV, in *Arms, Industry and America*, ed. Kenneth Davis (The Reference Shelf, vol. 43, no. 1) (New York: Wilson, 1971), p. 77

than expected. The after-tax profits of the aerospace industry, of which these contractors were the major companies, were 12.5 percent higher than for American industry as a whole. Those firms with the worst records appeared to receive the highest profits. . . . This is what I mean when I refer to the "unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex."¹⁶

EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE PEACE

Religious Objections to War

Like warfare itself, criticism of war and efforts to achieve peace reach far back in history. The founders of the great world religions have been opposed to war, and pacifism has been found among adherents of Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Christianity. Some prophets among the Hebrews looked forward to a time when people would mold their spears into pruning hooks and their swords into plowshares and would no longer know war. Among the early Greeks, opposition to war was found mainly among the Stoics. The early Christians stressed nonviolence and refused to bear arms, but this stand, along with that of the Stoics, was abandoned when certain emperors embraced Stoicism (Marcus Aurelius) or Christianity (Constantine). As we have seen, Christians in the medieval period sought to apply principles of justice to the conduct of war and to set limits to it in practice. Various religious sects or groups of Christians, such as the Anabaptists, Mennonites, and Quakers, have refused to bear arms. In the twentieth century, sentiment against war has been growing among Protestant denominations as well as among Roman Catholics.

A recent example of the religious communities' response to war and disarmament is a statement of the Vatican to the United Nations in 1976. It

absolutely condemns the use of weapons of mass destruction [and the armaments race is] to be condemned unreservedly. [It is a danger in terms of the use of these weapons, an injustice,] for it constitutes a violation of law by asserting the primacy of force and a form of theft, [a mistake since other forms of employment are possible and a folly since a system of international relations based on fear] is a kind of collective hysteria . . . which does not achieve its end [i.e., security].¹⁷

¹⁶William Proxmire, "Blank Check for the Military," address delivered before United States Senate, March 10, 1969, in Davis, pp. 82-83.

¹⁷"The Catholic Church and Disarmament," Statement of the Holy See on Disarmament from "Strengthening of the Role of the United Nations in the Field of Disarmament," in *The Nuclear Challenge to Christian Conscience*, ed. James Wallis (Washington, D.C.: Sojourners, 1978), p. 5.

The document concludes its condemnation of the armaments race as being against humanity and God on two fundamental moral grounds:

When the damage caused is disproportionate to the values we are seeking to safeguard, "it is better to suffer injustice than to defend ourselves" (Pius XII) [and] it constitutes a provocation which explains—psychologically, economically, and politically—the emergence and growth of another kind of competition: the small armaments race. Terrorism, in fact, often appears to be the last means of defense against this abuse of power by the large nations and a violent protest against the injustice created or perpetuated by the use or threat thereof on the part of better-armed states.¹⁸

MARK TWAIN'S "WAR PRAYER"

O Lord our God, help us to tear their soldiers to bloody
shreds with our shells;
help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms
of their patriot dead;
help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of
their wounded, writhing in pain;
help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire;
help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with
unavailing grief;
help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to
wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and,
hunger and thirst, sports of the sunflames of summer
and the icy
winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring
Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it—
for our sakes who adore Thee, Lord,
blast their hopes, blight their lives, protract their bitter
pilgrimage, make heavy their steps, water their way
with their tears, stain the white snow with the blood of
their wounded feet!
We ask it, in the spirit of love, of Him Who is the Source of Love,
and Who is the ever-faithful refuge and friend of all that are
sore beset and seek His aid with humble and contrite hearts.
AMEN.

Mark Twain, *The War Prayer* (New York: Harper, 1970).

¹⁸Wallis, p. 5

Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens, 1835–1910) was one of America's most renowned writers. He was an essayist, novelist, and humorist best known for The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. The War Prayer, a bitter attack on war, was not published until after his death.

National Sovereignty Reexamined

Even apart from religious opposition, the revulsion against war is spreading rapidly among some young people but is by no means confined to the young (although it might be argued that some opposition to the military is motivated by a personal desire to avoid military service for selfish reasons). Opposition to the Vietnam War made it possible for many Americans to uncouple the traditional bond between patriotism and support for any war in which American forces were engaged.

Nevertheless, the tough moral questions concern the possibility of achieving peace while maintaining active responsibility for freedom and justice in the world. One of the most important, if not *the* most important moral and social issue of our time, has to do with the relationship of states or nations to one another. Are we destined in the near future to move into an era of peace, international understanding, and goodwill, or will more terrible wars threaten the future of our civilization and perhaps of humanity? For the first time in human history, humanity has the power to change its own nature and even to destroy all life.

The dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 not only brought World War II to a sudden and decisive end but changed the nature of warfare itself, as we have seen. Unless we can revise our old-fashioned ways of thinking and acting, overcome our cultural lag, bring our morals up to date, and apply them to the new conditions that we face, the new power may destroy us.

Some would maintain that war is a phenomenon that can be eliminated. It is a social phenomenon like dueling and slavery. Just as these have been eliminated from most of the earth's surface, so war can be eliminated. In fact war already has been eliminated from considerable areas—in the fifty states in the United States and among the nations within the British Commonwealth, for example. Disputes arise between political units, but no longer do the peoples even dream of settling these disputes by warfare. People, however, do tend to become belligerent when threatened and especially when their emotions are stirred by aggressive leaders.

An especially obstinate fallacy is the view that the nation-state is the last stage of social evolution and that nothing must be done to impair the sovereignty of the nation. In fact, the nation may *not* be the last and highest expression of social progress. The times in which we live call for some form of world community and government since a world of competing and unrestrained national sovereignties is a world of conflict and periodic wars. The world is too interdependent for any nation to be the exclusive judge of policies and actions, especially when its national interests are involved. While nationalism and patriotism can be good, they can also be perverted and overemphasized. They can lead to the belief that the state can do no wrong or that its interests are superior to the interests of the world community.

Demilitarizing the Power Struggle

A dangerous practice, one that tends to lead directly to war, is the old game of power politics. It is closely related to the concept of national sovereignty, and it frequently takes the form of economic imperialism. Either economic or political considerations may be dominant, but the result is much the same. The drives for power and strategic position, for prestige, for sources of raw material, and for markets have been major causes of war. During the last few decades, ideological factors or wide differences in social philosophies have added to world tension.

Given these factors, the modern game of power politics is played with military might. The balance of power has been identified with the balance of terror. Any diminution in the capacity to terrorize a potential enemy might be taken, according to some, as a sign of weakness

and an invitation to a Communist threat. . . . If all nuclear weapons suddenly ceased to exist, much of the world would immediately be laid open to conquest by the masses of Russian and Chinese men under conventional arms. [The logical conclusion of this line of thinking is clear.] We are against [disarmament] because we *need* our armaments—all of those we presently have, and more. We need weapons for both the limited and the unlimited war. . . .¹⁹

The only way to avoid reaching this logical conclusion, according to critics, is to demilitarize the power struggle. Recognizing the need for an international police force and the need for each nation to have enough force to secure obedience to its laws, Walter Millis, among others, has asked whether the international organization of power on a police force

¹⁹Barry M. Goldwater, "Why Not Victory?" in Waskow, pp. 68–69.

basis rather than on a military basis can develop to the point where it becomes generally "recognized as both practicable and desirable?"²⁰

To achieve such a goal, Millis concedes, would presuppose a system of internally sovereign governments each with sufficient power to enforce domestic order. But such force could be kept within the bounds necessary to ensure that it could not be a military threat to its neighbors. The arms race would no longer be necessary, and thus the world would be spared the ever-present threat of nuclear catastrophe.

Millis admits that the appeal to a police force has serious drawbacks, among them its rigidity and its vulnerability to subversion and police-state tactics internal to each nation. He concedes that "nobody would think twice about it except for the appalling nature of the only apparent alternative—a thermonuclear 'balance of terror' and a resultant arms race likely to break down into a catastrophe worse than anything that even the police-form type of organization might invite."²¹ Nevertheless, he argues, in practice, permitting only a police-force type of organization has worked. He points to the arrangements in Latin America. Most Latin American countries arm primarily for internal purposes. While external political interests have produced rebellions and subversion in other countries, this has been done for the most part without resort to war as such. Millis concludes that

one may cite this as a case in which a considerable group of sovereign nation-states, varying widely in size, wealth, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, social organization, and economic need, with an extensive tradition of organized warfare among themselves, has reached a tacit conclusion that organized war is no longer a necessary or useful institution in ordering their power relationships, and has in effect abandoned it.²²

Although such a demilitarization of the power struggle does not solve the problems of economic or political injustice or the problems of freedom under dictatorships, it at least makes their solutions depend on something less than nuclear annihilation.

Psychological Strategies

Another way of avoiding the nuclear consequences of power politics played with military force is to approach the problem from a psychological angle. When people prepare for war and think of war, they tend to create

²⁰Walter Millis, "Permanent Peace," in Walter Millis, Reinhold Niebuhr, Harrison Brown, James Real, and William O. Douglas, *A World Without War* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1961), pp. 133–134.

²¹Millis, et al., pp. 133–134.

²²Millis, et al., p. 139.

war. That is the danger in what is known as "the military mind." When people live in a warlike atmosphere, the tinder is always there and a small spark may easily ignite it. Two persons may quarrel over a trivial thing; under ordinary circumstances the matter will blow over or be settled in some peaceful way. But let these same persons quarrel while each holds a loaded gun, and the chance for a peaceful settlement is much less.

Applied to nations, can we expect one nation to be secure by being stronger than any other nation without expecting the other nation to think the same way? If one nation becomes the strongest for a time, must not some other nation overtake it if it is to become secure in its turn? When other nations fear, they too begin to arm to the teeth and to combine against those whom they fear. This creates a vicious circle that has led to war in the past and is likely to do so in the future. Fear and the desire to be strong lead to national rivalry, then to power politics and imperialism, and finally to war.

In an age in which scientific discoveries are taking place so rapidly, how can we have any assurance that we can always be the strongest nation? Types of warfare become obsolete almost overnight. The atomic scientists tell us that any advantage we may possess today is likely to be temporary.

Given the psychological nature of much of the arms race, it is not surprising to find some psychologists bringing to bear on the problem findings from their field of study. One such scientist is Charles E. Osgood.

Most Americans [he argues] are filled with the basically irrational conviction that the only way to avoid military conflict with the Communist world is to prepare for it. . . . Unconsciously projecting our own norms and values, we feel threatened when they are not adhered to and attribute it to the essential boorishness and deceit of others. By encouraging self-delusion and condoning a double standard of national morality, our psycho-logic has created an oversimplified world inhabited by angels and boggy men.²³

Osgood asks us to picture two husky men on a long and rigid seesaw balanced above an abyss. As each man makes a move, the other must counter it. As they move progressively outward, the unbalancing effect of each step becomes greater and the more agile each man must be to maintain the precarious equilibrium. Both men become increasingly fearful but neither is willing to admit it for fear that the other will then take advantage of him.

On the assumption that both men (or nations) would like to get out of this increasingly untenable and dangerous situation, Osgood suggests some psychologically realistic steps they can take. They need to engage in a "peace offensive" whose goal is the reduction of tensions and the creation of an atmosphere in which an end to nuclear terror can be achieved. A

²³Charles E. Osgood, "Reciprocal Initiative," in Waskow, pp. 69-70.

unilateral act by one side must be seen by the other side as reducing his external threat. It must be accompanied by an explicit invitation to reciprocate. In addition, a unilateral act of disarmament must be carried through with or without a prior commitment by the other side to reciprocate (thus disarming the opponent's claim that you are not seriously interested in pursuing peace). To be successful, unilateral acts must also be planned in phases and must be widely publicized in advance. Nevertheless, Osgood concedes, unilateral acts cannot be carried to the point, without reciprocation, where no deterrent capability exists nor any defense of a nation's "heartland."

The strongest objection to this effort to achieve peace is that it is not realistic enough, that it weakens a nation and prepares it to be overrun by its enemies. Osgood responds to the charge that his suggestion is idealistic by claiming that "the real idealists today, as Marc Raskin put it to me so well, are those who actually believe that the arms race can be continued indefinitely without something going wrong, who actually believe that the men behind the nuclear weapons are suprarational and will behave like so many computers."²⁴ Only by taking carefully calculated, unilateral steps toward disarmament can nations get off the dangerously teetering board that threatens to dump them all into the abyss of a thermonuclear holocaust. One such step might be the commitment to a series of strategic arms limitation treaties, which have traveled a rocky road in recent years. These treaties must be perceived as being in the best interest of all nations, not as ways of weakening one nation as another builds up its arsenal.

Conversion to a Peacetime Economy

Domestically, as we have seen, the military-industrial establishment accounts for a large sector of the economy. Demilitarizing the nation will have significant consequences for the economy unless the consequences are carefully prepared for. Recently, many analysts are turning to the issue of converting industries now tied to military production into peacetime or domestically useful production. Presently, it is estimated, the Pentagon has 3.4 million members in the armed services and 1.3 million civilian workers in seventy countries. There are 3.8 million industrial workers whose work is wholly tied to war production; millions more are indirectly dependent on the defense budget. Half of all scientists and engineers in private industry work in the aerospace and defense fields.²⁵ Military production managed by the Department of Defense is the largest planned economy outside the Soviet Union: its property amounts to 10 percent of the

²⁴Osgood, in Waskow, p. 79.

²⁵Richard J. Barnet, from *The Economy of Death*, as cited in Davis, p. 219.

assets of the entire American economy (it owns 39 million acres of land) and it is richer than any small nation in the world.²⁶

One crucial result of this degree of military production is increasing inflation.

Heavy military spending generates buying power without producing an equivalent supply of economically useful goods for the market. The excess of disposable income adds to pressure on prices and in time becomes a prescription for intractable inflation. A disproportionate number of its many victims are among the weakest members of society: the old suffer more than jobholders, the poor with marginal incomes more than the rich.²⁷

In addition, productive capacity is shifted away from domestically and socially necessary goods to arms production.

By converting military production into other forms of production, many social ills can be cured at the same time that nuclear terror is eased. One analyst has argued that there are four areas of the civilian economy that desperately need the capital and skills now employed by the military: railroads, mass transit, resource recovery, and solar energy. With such conversion, he argues, they will generate far more jobs per \$1 billion invested than the money now used by the Pentagon. Such conversion must be carefully planned; there will be necessary financial cushions to ease the change-over. But if conversion becomes a priority for the nation, the economic "blackmail" now used by some to dampen criticism of the military-industrial complex would be eradicated.²⁸

International Organizations

Among the paths to peace are the growth of transnational or international organizations to promote cooperation among the nations, the general reduction of armaments, a growing sentiment in opposition to war, the growth of democracy, and the maintenance of full employment and a sense of security and well-being on the domestic scene. The twentieth century seems to be demanding some form of world community and order. Probably the nation-state is not destined to pass away soon. Just as it was superimposed on the family, tribe, or clan, thereby eliminating tribal warfare, transnational or international institutions need to be established as a step toward the elimination of wars between nations. The United Nations

²⁶Robert J. Heilbroner, "Military America," a review of Seymour Melman's *Pentagon Capitalism: The Political Economy of War*, as cited in Davis, p. 143.

²⁷Sivard, p. 731.

²⁸William Winpisinger, "A Union Converts," in *Economic Conversion: From Military to Civilian Industry*. *Grapevine* 11, no. 7 (February 1980) (New York: Joint Strategy and Action Committee).

is a step in this direction. The world is so interdependent that acts in any one part of it affect the peoples in the rest of it.

World organizations will be necessary to give attention to issues that concern men and women everywhere or that are too far-reaching and important to be handled even by regional groups. The United Nations' Charter includes these words: "We the people of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights . . . have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims." If peace is to be secure, a strong world public opinion and a strengthening of the peace-keeping machinery of the world, including United Nations police forces, would appear to be necessary.

Although such organizations are important, of course, the spirit, the attitude, and the living faith that persons hold are of even greater importance. While the accident of birth makes a person a member of a nation, he or she is also a member of humanity. Persons can be loyal to humankind without being disloyal to their own state or kindred. When they feel that the rights of other groups are as sacred as those of their own, they are approaching moral maturity.

A former assistant Secretary of State has said, "Moral force does not move mountains, but it moves men to action, and by their action mountains can be moved—and civilizations built or destroyed."²⁹ There is a moral obligation facing persons of intelligence and goodwill to make a strenuous effort to transform the present international system into one that will be more effective in maintaining peace with freedom and justice for all without resorting to nuclear confrontation that might destroy all persons and values forever.

CHAPTER REVIEW

A. Thermonuclear power

1. Weapons of destruction: When we have the power to destroy every city in the world seven times over, we face a moral problem of the first order.

B. "Just war" theory

1. There have been historic attempts to develop moral criteria for distinguishing between just and unjust wars.
2. Some argue that in an age of nuclear weapons these criteria may justify too much.

²⁹Ernest A. Gross, *The United Nations: Structure for Peace* (New York: Harper, 1962), p. 125.

3. It is even possible to consider surrender as a moral alternative to nuclear war.

C. Obstacles to peace

1. Innate aggression in the human species has been cited as a reason to believe wars can never be eliminated.
2. Others argue that every nation has a right and duty to maintain a minimal level of deterrent capability.
3. The military-industrial complex has a vested interest in maintaining an economy and attitude of war preparation.

D. Efforts to achieve peace

1. There have historically been many objections to war on religious grounds.
2. The supremacy of national sovereignty may need to be reexamined in the light of international implications of nuclear war.
3. Demilitarizing the power struggle may be one solution to war.
4. There are also psychological strategies that might help to defuse and de-escalate the arms race and the balance of terror on which it is based.
5. The economic interests of industries geared for war can be met by careful conversion to peacetime economies.
6. Finally, more attention must be given to international organizations like the United Nations if war with global consequences is to be avoided.

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