

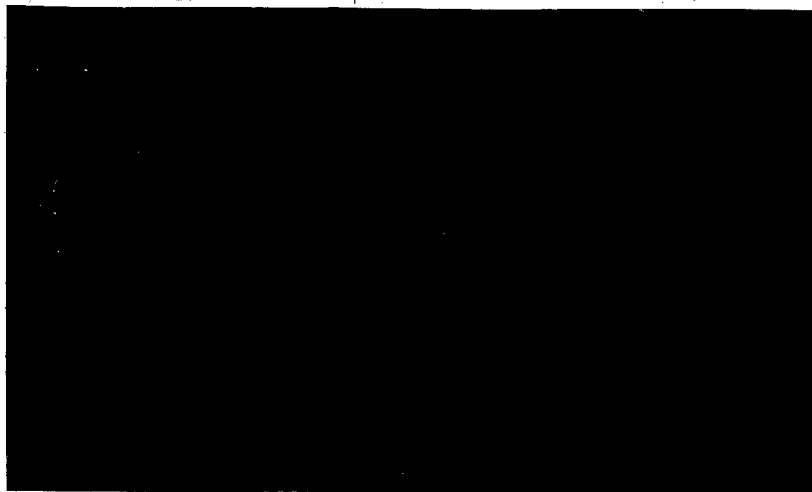
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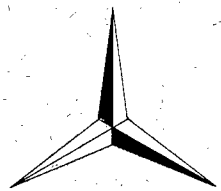
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NATO NUCLEAR STRATEGY

SOME LESSONS FROM HISTORY

by

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NATO NUCLEAR STRATEGY – SOME LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Clausewitz showed convincingly and logically that political superiority, acquired through a country's foreign policy, is an essential element of war Today a great power's foreign policy can only be a policy of coalition, and this involves accepting certain limitations of national sovereignty, a fact of which the German leaders in both world wars were still completely unaware.

General F. Von Senger und Etterlin,
Neither Fear nor Hope.

The Relevance of History

In this nuclear age, most of the history of past wars is wholly irrelevant to the future. But we can still learn something from it in one critically important field – that of political reactions and human behavior under the stress of war or the threat of imminent war. World War II was the first great war of which it was clear in advance that death and destruction would not be confined to the military forces in the field, but would have a direct and immediate impact on the civilian populations at home; so the history of what actually happened in that context before and after its outbreak in September 1939 is, to my mind, an indispensable background to any realistic examination of strategic policy in an age when the vital need is the prevention of war – which, unhappily, still involves the capacity to fight it effectively if it is forced upon us.

The tendency of history to repeat itself is a reason to welcome one of the decisions agreed at Nassau in December 1962, namely, the agreement to assign Bomber Command of the R.A.F. to NATO.

Crisis in 1939-40

In 1939 I was Director of Plans on the Air Staff in London. As such I was appointed the Air Force member of the British team in the shockingly belated Anglo-French Staff Conversations in the spring of that year. Looking back on it today it seems almost incredible that up to that time, six months before the outbreak of war, there had been virtually no contacts between the British and French Staffs, except some tentative administrative arrangements — expressly without commitment — in connection with a possible dispatch to France of two divisions and the twenty light-bomber squadrons of the Advanced Air Striking Force (A.A.S.F.) of Bomber Command in the event of war. That bore no relation to any common policy. There was no formal alliance, no commitment on our part to send an Army Expeditionary Force and Air Contingent to France, and, in short, no combined strategic planning to meet German aggression against either France or Britain.

The British Air Staff had, of course, for several years been planning for the employment of Bomber Command in the event of war. And our conception of its role — perhaps naturally in view of the lack of any combined policy or planning with the French — had been one of direct attack on Germany, or more accurately counterattack, because of the widespread apprehension in Britain about the possibility of what was called a "knock-out blow" by the German Air Force against our Island. Today, in the light of experience of air warfare that we then lacked, we may smile at those fears; it might, however, be salutary to look back and remember them before we in Britain or France talk too lightly about independent nuclear deterrents.

But the point here is this: We knew that we were in no position to fight Nazi Germany except in combination with France, and we made the reasonable assumption that we should be able to count on the use of French airfields in war — in fact, as I have said, we had actually held some discussions about the matter with the French Staff on the administrative level. But what we wanted those airfields for, in the absence

of any combined plan, was to base our short-range light bombers nearer to their German targets than they could be in our own country, to play their part in our plans for counterattack against the German air force, war industry, oil resources, and so forth.

When, at last, pressure by our Chiefs of Staff, supported by Mr. Eden as Foreign Secretary, resulted in agreement to undertake combined strategic planning (and our first meeting was not till March 29, 1939) it was perhaps natural that we British officers should lay more stress on the possibility of a knock-out blow against England, and that our French colleagues should emphasize more strongly the dangers of an invasion of France — and they, of course, as it turned out, were right.

But we were agreed on the possibility of an enemy offensive through Belgium and Holland into France; and the French were quite naturally and rightly obsessed with the need to halt that invasion. And that led them — again I think perhaps naturally — to entertain some suspicions of our intentions for the use of Bomber Command. We had previously been at pains to make clear to them that the object of sending the A.A.S.F. to France was to bomb Germany, not to support the French Army which we thought was the job of the French Air Force. But I hope my French friends will forgive me for saying that the *Armée de L'Air* was not very strong in 1939 — which was more the fault of the politicians than of General Vuillemin and the French Air Staff. And our colleagues in the Staff Conversations clearly saw visions of us carrying on from some of their airfields a sort of private war — a *guerre de course* — against Germany, leaving their very inadequate Air Force to support their *Couverture* divisions in resisting the invasion.

I had some difficulty in persuading them that as members of an alliance we should certainly not do any such thing, and finally handed them a memorandum containing a formal undertaking of which I need only quote the last paragraph: "A German attack by land and air in

great force directed against France . . . would constitute a decisive situation and, in these circumstances, collaboration with the French Army and Air Force in stemming the invasion would become the primary commitment of the British Bomber Command."

Eleven years later, as Chief of the Air Staff, I attended one of the early conferences of NATO General Officers, at the R.A.F. School of Land-Air Warfare. I found there a hint of the same sort of suspicions on the part of our European allies about our intentions for the use of Bomber Command, this time in relation to the threat of a Russian invasion of Germany. And I found it necessary to repeat in almost identical words the formal assurance that I had given to the French eleven years earlier.

Now, in order to point more clearly the moral I want to draw from this, I must go back to what actually did happen when the German invasion put an end to the *drole de guerre* in May 1940.

The light-bomber squadrons based in France with obsolete Fairey Battles were immediately thrown into the battle in direct support of the armies, and were virtually wiped out in the process; we need not here concern ourselves further with them, except to note that their crews died because we had failed to provide them with a more modern type in time. The problem of the employment of the remainder of Bomber Command from bases in England was less straightforward; and it was the subject of protracted discussions with General Gamelin and the French Government during the opening months of the war, in fact almost up to the time when it was clear that the battle of France was over. By that time the R.A.F. had lost in only about four weeks of fighting nearly 1000 aircraft, about 400 of which were of Bomber Command, whose total first line strength was then only about 500 — most of the balance being fighters which we desperately needed for the defense of Britain in the battle we knew must follow.

During and subsequent to the Anglo-French conversations we in the

Air Staff had come to the conclusion that the best way of delaying the advance of the German armies into the Low Countries, which all agreed would be the *Schwerpunkt* of the invasion (and we knew we could do no more than delay it), would be to attack the Ruhr with its network of rail and road communications. Let me emphasize here that the accusation sometimes levelled against us that we indulged a passion for "strategic" bombing at the expense of our ability to stem the invasion, is wholly unjustified. Our appreciation of the situation led us honestly to believe -- and there is still no evidence that we were wrong -- that we could do more to dislocate and delay the communications serving the enemy's advance through Belgium and Holland (what we should now call interdiction) in this area than in any other; and in this belief we had the powerful support of no less a person than the C.I.G.S., General Ironside -- right up to the very last moment when he suddenly and unaccountably changed his mind.

This policy was approved in October 1939 by a committee of the British War Cabinet, and in the subsequent months was repeatedly pressed upon the French authorities. For six months they strongly resisted it on the grounds that the inevitable retaliation by the enemy would, to begin with, endanger the deployment of the French Army, and then lay open their cities to a scale of attack against which they were in no position to defend themselves. It was not until April 23rd -- less than three weeks before the invasion started -- that the Allied Supreme War Council approved a somewhat watered-down version of the plan for attack on the Ruhr communications.

Even when the invasion began on May 10, the British War Cabinet (including, be it noted, Mr. Churchill who could hardly be accused of lacking offensive spirit) still withheld authority to put this plan into effect; and it was not until after the German bombing of Rotterdam four days later that the first attacks on the Ruhr were made -- a delay which might have proved disastrous had there in fact been any chance of any plan being really effective in the circumstances of that time, which of course we now know there was not.

Even so we were not allowed to continue for more than two nights in the face of the desperate -- and humanly understandable -- pressure from the French for closer support in the immediate battle zone. From then on the main effort of Bomber Command was directed to trying vainly to make what were known as *coupures* on roads, railways, bridges, etc. close behind the battlefield -- a task for which the primitive aircraft of the day were quite unfitted, which had been the reason for our resistance to this course of action in the earlier discussions with the French.

Another fact about the campaign of 1940 which, I am afraid, has not yet impressed itself sufficiently strongly on some of our governments, is that the German armies of that day whose government had appreciated the realities of what was then modern war went, like a hot knife through butter, through the armies of Britain and France whose governments had refused to face up to the costs involved. It is difficult now to believe that we British who invented the tank in 1916 (as we pioneered the technique of air support of armies in the desert a quarter of a century later) went to war in 1939 without a single armored division.

There is one other bit of history of this grim time to which I must refer, because I think it also contains a lesson which is too often forgotten in present-day discussions about the use of "independent" national deterrents. That is the story of the operation with the unromantic code-name of "Haddock."

By the end of May 1940 it was pretty clear that Mussolini was going to intervene against us. On the 31st the Allied Supreme War Council agreed that in that event the R.A.F. should immediately bomb the industrial cities of Northern Italy. The shorter range Wellington squadrons were to operate from an advanced refueling base in the Marseilles area, and on June 3 a Wing Headquarters and servicing echelon was dispatched to Salon. Italy declared war on June 10. And immediately the plan for the Haddock operation met with violent opposition from the French authorities, from the government, from General Vuillemin's

headquarters, and from the local French Bomber Group Commander, on the grounds that Italian retaliation would fall on Marseilles, Lyons, and Paris. Mr. Churchill insisted that the operations should proceed in view of the agreement in the Supreme War Council; but on the night of June 11 when the first Wellingtons taxied out into position, the French drove trucks onto the runways so that they could not take off.

I am not blaming the French for this, nor claiming that the British action was right; as a matter of fact I am sure, looking back on it, that we were wrong to press on with the operation with the totally inadequate resources available — indeed the few raids that did go to Milan and Turin before operations were suspended on the opening of negotiations for an armistice are rightly described in the British Official History as "singularly unprofitable." I tell the story merely to point a moral that we should never overlook when we are tempted to talk lightly about attacking independently an enormously more powerful enemy, whose retaliation today would be unthinkably more catastrophic than anything could have been in June 1940.

Cuba

Before going on to suggest some of the lessons we should learn from experience in 1939-40, I must jump forward 22 years into the megaton age and recall one other bit of much more recent history, which I think holds out one of the most important lessons of all. I mean the Cuba episode. I hope none of us Europeans were foolish enough to believe that Cuba to Europe is what poor Mr. Chamberlain thought Czechoslovakia was to Britain in 1938—a far-away country of which we know nothing and which is not really of any direct concern to us. The Cuba issue was literally vital to each one of us; suffice it to ask what would have become of our confidence in America's ability to fulfill her obligations in the defense of Europe, had she been unable to face the implications of confronting such a direct and brazen threat to her own local security.

Very few people know what was in the famous unpublished letter from Khrushchev to Mr. Kennedy. But there is not the least doubt that in that awful week he looked over the brink at the genuine possibility of nuclear war, and was absolutely appalled at what he saw. It was a first and classic example of a nuclear deterrent in operation. That is the first point to remember.

The second is that there is neither evidence in history nor reason in common sense for a belief that the possibility of the British Bomber Command joining the U.S. Strategic Air Command in a nuclear war arising out of Cuba ever entered into Khrushchev's calculations. I have no doubt we would have done so, and in fact the Command was brought quietly but promptly to a high state of readiness. But I don't believe it ever occurred to Khrushchev, faced as he was with the colossal strength of American nuclear power.

A third point is that Khrushchev is, nevertheless, surely far too intelligent and shrewd an operator to have failed to draw the right conclusions from the fact that Mr. Kennedy received the solid and astonishingly prompt support of his allies in NATO and the Organization of American States.

A fourth is that the Cuba episode eliminated, or at least enormously reduced, the chances of war arising from miscalculation. Perhaps the most dangerous possibility of miscalculation used to lie in the idea that the United States was a "paper tiger"—that the Americans were soft and would not face the risk of nuclear war if or when the time ever came. Khrushchev at any rate clearly no longer cherishes any illusions about that.

Now let me suggest some lessons which I think we should have learned—but am afraid some of us have not learned—from all this.

Counterattack on the Heartland

The first and most obvious lesson for the future from Cuba is that the West must retain for as long as may be necessary (which means until comprehensive multilateral disarmament is a reality) the capacity to inflict nuclear catastrophe on the heartland of Russia in the event of a Russian attempt to inflict any sort of catastrophe on us. This is what is commonly but misleadingly described as *the* deterrent; it is an essential element in the deterrent, but not the only one. I do not propose to argue the need for it, because that is accepted by all but an insignificant minority.

On the other hand, it is a time-honored principle that the force required to do any military job must clearly be enough to serve the purpose, but should be no more. "Enough" as Eisenhower once said "is plenty." It is certainly unwise to have more than plenty in one element of military power at the expense of failure to have enough in another. No weight of heavy artillery in an army is any good if the infantry is hopelessly inadequate. Moreover, military thinkers from Sun Tzu in 400 B.C. to Vannevar Bush in 1950 A.D. have warned us against the self-defeating implications of overinsurance in armaments. In considering the problem of the strength necessary for this element of the deterrent, we are bound to take into account the fact that the issues at stake are so appalling compared to anything in history that it would be criminal folly to take any chances; we must allow a most generous margin for misjudgment in a situation which has no precedents to guide us. But margin piled upon margins can add up to political, economic and military lunacy. In this element of the deterrent the United States now has, and still more when the Minuteman and Polaris programs are completed will have, more than enough — an enormous overkill potential, including second strike capacity.

We should never forget in this connection that a primary aim of Western policy is to work towards general comprehensive disarmament, which alone can give the world real security in the long term. That should mean that any military program, and particularly any increase over existing programs, should be subjected to the test of two questions: First, is it absolutely indispensable to our security within the period before any really substantial measure of disarmament is conceivable? And secondly, is it likely to improve the chances of achieving general disarmament, or the reverse? There will always be a nice balance between the two; like most things in life this is not a straightforward matter of either — or. But I cannot avoid the impression that the second question seldom receives the consideration it deserves.

The moral surely is that anything more than American nuclear capacity, for the purpose of inflicting catastrophic punishment on Russia, is wholly unnecessary. And this applies more particularly to additions to allied strength which are solely for this purpose, or anyway can be useful for nothing else — into which category obviously fall the Multilateral Force (MLF) and the British Polaris submarine program. For the first, even its most ardent advocates hardly claim any military value; it is designed as a diplomatic or political measure — surely the most expensive and in my view the least necessary ever devised — and as such I shall touch on it later in this paper. The second raises the thorny problem of "independent national nuclear deterrents" to which I must now turn.

"Independent" National Deterrence

This seems to me to be the subject of more muddled thinking than any military problem in my experience. So much so that it seems necessary to emphasize the truism that an independent deterrent, to mean anything, must have two qualities: It must be really independent, and it must be a credible deterrent — something that really is able to deter.

Let us look first at the question of independence. That, if it means anything, must mean that the nation owning the nuclear force concerned must be politically and militarily capable in the last resort of using it independently, singlehandedly and, if necessary, against the wishes of their allies, to carry nuclear devastation into the heart of an enemy country — which, for all practical purposes as far as we are now concerned, we can take to be Russia (I am assuming for the purpose of this paper that China will not be a first-rate nuclear power within the next 20 years).

It could, I suppose, be argued that one of the nuclear powers might wish to use it, or the threat of it, against some nation other than Russia; against Egypt, for instance, to deter an attack on Israel, or China in a crisis over Formosa or Hong Kong, or Indonesia to curb Sukarno's ambitions to extend his lebensraum to the Philippines and the Thai border. I do not deny that a strictly limited use of some lower yield nuclear weapons is conceivable in certain circumstances in any of those areas. But I find it very difficult (to say the least) to visualize nuclear deterrence in the generally accepted sense of the term being employed in such circumstances. And my personal memories of the occasion in which I was involved many years ago, before Russia had an effective nuclear capacity, when some people in the United States wished to use atomic bombs against the Chinese at a critical stage of the Korean war, makes me tolerably certain that nuclear weapons would not in fact be used anywhere by any one nuclear power against the wishes of the others.

Now what do we mean by "deterrence"? General de Gaulle has defined it well. France, he has said, is a country "that could be destroyed at any moment unless the aggressor were turned from the attack by the certainty that he also would suffer destruction," and he added that the certainty must exist "that a riposte of the same kind and the same degree would be immediately released." Exactly! It would be impossible

to define nuclear deterrence more clearly or correctly. The certainty must exist that a counterattack would in fact be launched that would bring equivalent destruction on Russia — or, at the very least, a high degree of uncertainty must exist that it would not be. It is no good basing a policy on a threat which you hope you will never have to implement — taking refuge in catch phrases about ability to inflict "unacceptable" damage on Russia. Who is going to decide, if the awful moment ever comes, what the Kremlin would regard as "unacceptable"? It is wholly unwise to ignore the possibility that the deterrent might fail to deter, and then the government of the country claiming nuclear independence would have to take the appalling decision to launch its nuclear strike force in a bilateral exchange with Russia, accepting (in the case of any ally but America) the certainty of virtually complete elimination. For the United States and Russia, with their vast strength and huge areas, the prospect would be a degree less gloomy; for Britain and France, the only advantage of a small missile-submarine force seems to me to be that it would afford us the doubtful consolation of a posthumous revenge — devastating no doubt but not lethal — after our countries and the bulk of our population had been obliterated.

I believe the whole military power of the Western alliance can be an effective deterrent because of the knowledge that, if it failed to deter, it could inflict far more total destruction upon Russia than she could impose upon the alliance as a whole. But frankly I do not believe that there is such a thing as independent nuclear deterrence, even for the United States. This may seem a contradiction of what I have just said about the Cuba affair. But I think that episode was *sui generis*, and do not believe the Kremlin will ever again be so stupid as to offer a challenge in an area where they are at such a hopeless disadvantage as they were in the Caribbean.

Anyway, suppose things had not turned out as they did in October 1962. Suppose there had been a Chamberlain in Britain and a Daladier

in France and someone less tough than old Adenauer in Bonn, and those three allies had taken the line that Cuba was no business of theirs — would Mr. Kennedy have been able to sustain his courageous resolution to the point of nuclear war? Suppose there had been a Stalin instead of Khrushchev in Moscow, and his reaction to the American threat of blockade had been to seal the Berlin autobahn and move thirty or forty armored and motorized divisions up to the partition line — what then? Surely at least there must be serious doubt about the answer, and there should be no room for serious doubt in this equation. To me, the only thing about which there is no doubt is that in facing up to the threat of nuclear war we must do so, not individually, but as an alliance — *bras dessus bras dessous* as old Foch used to say.

If that is accepted — and I cannot see how it can be denied — it has a direct bearing on the problem of control of nuclear strategy, which I shall discuss later in this paper.

The French attitude to nuclear independence has, to me, an air of almost total unreality, and I doubt whether more than a very few people outside the Elysee really believe in it. I wonder whether the truth is not that General de Gaulle does not believe in the possibility of war as long as the United States retain their nuclear capacity, but regards his theoretical independence as a political symbol of the greatness of France and of her influence in world affairs. Looking back on Operation Haddock and the arguments about the Ruhr plan in 1940, does anyone really believe that even that indomitable man could actually launch his *force de frappe* in a single-handed forlorn hope against the nuclear might of Russia?

As for the British position, it must I think be very difficult for foreigners to understand — it is difficult enough for many Englishmen, including myself; to me, and to many others who think like me, it seems (to put it mildly) to be equivocal.

There is one point on which I am in complete agreement with the British Government, namely, their claim that our nuclear status and record gives us a special position of influence in the world, particularly in relation to negotiations about disarmament, the test ban, and so on. I have never suggested — and would never agree — that we British should throw away our nuclear capacity, short of effective general disarmament; goodness knows we are not now contributing such an effective share of the military burdens of the Alliance as to entitle us to do that. But what gives us added influence in these world affairs is the fact that we are a formidable and very experienced nuclear power — not our pretensions to an independence that in point of fact we can never possess. And that in due course will also be true of France, when the *force de frappe* is a reality.

But apart from that, I confess I simply do not understand the British Government's attitude. It was on their sensible if belated suggestion at Nassau that Bomber Command, elements of the U. S. Strategic Air Command and of Tactical Air Forces based in Europe were assigned as "part of a NATO nuclear force" — what in the jargon of today would be called a multinational force. But at Nassau also the Multilateral Force and the British Polaris submarine project first saw the light of day. The latter was to be part of the former, but in para. 9 of the Bahamas Statement: "The Prime Minister made it clear" (not, be it noted, "The President and the Prime Minister agreed" as in earlier paragraphs) that it could be withdrawn from "international defense of the Western Alliance" if the British Government decided at any time that "supreme national interests are at stake." Apparently the idea behind this extraordinary paragraph is that, despite the cancellation of Skybolt, the British Government retains an "Independent Nuclear Deterrent" of its own — or will when the Polaris submarines are built and the V-bombers can no longer penetrate Russian defenses without

prohibitive loss. What else paragraph 9 means I do not pretend to understand. In any case, I should have thought there is only one "supreme national interest" and that is national survival, which can only be secured within the context of the Atlantic alliance. But apparently the theory is that some day in some part of the world (and some politicians have even mentioned Kuwait in this connection) a situation might arise in which the United States would say it is no concern of theirs, but we should regard the issue as being so nearly supreme a national interest that we should go it alone with Polaris submarines in the Persian Gulf or Indian Ocean or Far Eastern waters.

I have said enough earlier in this paper and elsewhere to make it clear that I simply cannot take this seriously. Perhaps the assumption is that we could indulge in a little private nuclear war with Sukarno, for instance, without any risk of Russian intervention against us. But is this a safe assumption? It may be; but is it a risk that any British Government would really take? If they miscalculated -- what then? In coming to a decision to accept any risk of all-out nuclear war, it is literally vital to hold the strongest possible cards and for the stake to be no less than a matter of life or death. Cuba showed that as part of an alliance we would face the risk; independently, I do not for a moment believe we should.

If there is any risk of Russian intervention against us, we British and French can only face it as part of the alliance. Whether or not you are sure (as I am) that the Americans would not default on their obligations to NATO, whatever you may feel about the need to depend on the American alliance, we should be practical and mature enough to recognize that we can't do without it. The present Prime Minister said in a speech in Ottawa in May 1963 that a Russian missile threat against Britain would be so colossal that it would be deterred only by the combination of United States and British nuclear power. And in October he said in another speech "without the closest alliance between the

U.S. and Britain there is no balance of power and therefore no security. There is no substitute for NATO. Nothing less than an Atlantic alliance will do. That is vital to the security of our island." That is obviously true, and it is the more curious that he should still subscribe to paragraph 9 of the Nassau agreement, still insist on the need for Britain to have an "independent deterrent." So wise a statesman can hardly believe that as part of an allied deterrent four British Polaris submarines could possibly tip the scale either way. And as for using them independently against Russia, does anyone really believe we should do so — remembering that a man like Churchill and his colleagues in the British Cabinet, at a time when the threat we faced amounted to a few thousand tons of primitive conventional bombs, hesitated for five days to authorize bombing of Germany, though we were already at war and facing a brutal invasion of Europe?

I may be asked why, if we are so unlikely to act independently, need anyone worry about the British and French claim to nuclear independence? The answer is simple. As recent events have proved, this claim bedevils the unity of the alliance; tends to result in similar claims by other people and leads to proliferation of nuclear weapons; gives rise to absurdities like the MLF and the British Polaris submarines which, as sure as tomorrow's dawn, can only be at the expense of other really important contributions which we Europeans should be making to the common defense; and gravely prejudices our chances of making genuine progress toward comprehensive disarmament.

Direct Defense of Europe

Let me now turn to the other, and in my view equally important element of the deterrent — namely our ability to present a really formidable direct defense against any attempt at invasion of Western Europe. I hope I have made it clear that I am not for a moment suggesting anything so silly as that we British should discard our very

efficient nuclear strike force, or that the French should cancel theirs before they have it. On the contrary, I think they both have a critically important part to play in this other element of the deterrent.

I have already suggested in connection with Cuba that the first element could be incredible and ineffective unless the second is credible and effective. The plain fact is that, while we are talking of spending huge sums on Polaris surface ships and submarines, the second element of the deterrent is still neither credible nor effective. The presence of six excellent American divisions should not blind us to the probability that, at present, the rest of what we used to call the Shield would not be much more effective in stemming a Russian invasion tomorrow than the French and British armies were in stemming a German invasion 24 years ago. And let us not think solely in terms of divisions; we should know from bitter experience in World War II that divisions are cold meat without adequate air support.

I gave the assurances to which I have referred earlier in this paper — to the French 25 years ago and to the NATO Generals 14 years ago — because I was (and remain) absolutely certain that, whatever might be the theoretically ideal employment of Bomber Command, in actual fact when the time came and the Alliance was in danger from massive invasion of Europe, it would be politically impossible to use it for any other purpose than for stemming that invasion. May 1940 proved me right — so much so that we were forced by political pressure when the time came to use our bombers in a way that we knew was technically and tactically hopeless. But what we were trying to do with Bomber Command before we were diverted to the *coupure* policy might very well have been effective then if our aircraft had been of present day types, and would certainly be an essential requirement tomorrow — namely interdiction.

The allied armies today, even at their present strength, could be made capable of putting up an infinitely more formidable defense on the

battlefield than they were able to in 1940, if they were properly deployed and endowed with good cross-country mobility and modern armor. The British battle forces, especially, could be made enormously more effective on the battlefield, with little if any increase in manpower, if we spent our money on adequate numbers of the really important things — V/STOL close-support aircraft, tactical missiles like Blue Water and antitank weapons like Swingfire — instead of squandering it on grossly expensive white elephants like Polaris submarines which, for us British, have absolutely no military justification whatsoever. But the forces under SHAPE exist to fight a battle if need be, and no battle plan is credible that does not provide for interdiction behind the battlefield, for stemming the forward flow of enemy reinforcement and supply, and paralyzing his movement of reserves.

I confess I am not clear — and doubt whether anybody is — about what this multilateral force, including the British submarines, is supposed to be going to do in war. I do not intend to argue whether or not mixed-manning is feasible, or whether all these Polaris vessels will be quickly sunk or not — all that sort of thing seems to me largely irrelevant. What I am clear about is that the last thing anyone who knows anything about air support of land operations would demand today for the purpose of tactical interdiction, is a megaton missile floating about in or under the Atlantic or North Sea. On the other hand, for some years to come the V-bombers will remain well fitted for the interdiction role for which, owing to the shorter penetration involved, Skybolt is not essential. And the Mirage IV's of the *force de frappe* will be even more suitable for that role.

A Realistic Plan for NATO

So that is what we should do. Forget these fancy gimmicks like mixed-manned ships and the British Polaris "deterrent," and instead use our resources for bringing our existing forces up to a condition in

which they are fit to fight any future war in Europe, and to fulfill their essential obligations East of Suez. We should use what we have now, or are bound to require in any event to replace it, and make the multinational force a reality. I think we British are largely to blame for the pressure in favor of the MLF by our failure to put forward any alternative that would serve the political purpose without being a military monstrosity.

Here then is such an alternative.

We should leave the first element of the deterrent — the counter-blow against the heartland of Russia — to the United States, accepting the reality that they would not use it if their allies were opposed to its use, and that we British and French could not use our nuclear weapons for that purpose except in combination with the United States. To those who object that a future President in Washington might be so unwise or so weak as to launch it against our express opposition or refuse to use it when he should, I would say that would be just too bad, but there is nothing we Europeans could do about it — having our own fractional "deterrents" would certainly not prevent that; what we should really need in the first case would be the ability to defend ourselves against the invasion which might well be the Russian riposte to an American threat. I need elaborate no further my utter disbelief that we should ever attack Russia independently of the United States.

We British and French should assign our Bomber Commands unreservedly to NATO, to form the hard core of an allied nuclear strike force under the command of SACEUR, with the primary role of defense against invasion. That force should also include all tactical air and missile forces of all the allies — other than the short-range "battlefield" weapons like Sergeant and Davy Crockett. It must include an American element; it must be a NATO force, not just a European one. The various national contingents should be grouped under a unified high command, subordinate to SACEUR, with a headquarters as fully inter-

national as SHAPE now is; and the commander should be a European officer, selected from among the principal European powers contributing forces to the command — who, of course, would include the Germans.

I do not speak parochially as an airman. I think it will be many years before the manned aircraft fades out for this sort of job, if it ever does; I look forward to seeing the allied interdiction force include the British T.S.R.2 and the production version of the American TFX, and perhaps modern light bombers like the Buccaneer II. But it must also include the longer range tactical missiles like Pershing and Mace; and if or when technological advance leads us to the conclusion that tactical missiles can be effective from floating platforms, whether surface or submerged (and there would be obvious advantages in that), then they too should be included in this SHAPE force.

Our experience in 1940 underlines the obvious need for a firm, well-planned program of interdiction. But, like any well-conducted force, this command must also have alternative plans to meet varying contingencies, for which the necessary training must be carried out in peacetime. I do not mean only within the NATO area itself, to support the defense of the flanks in Turkey or Norway, for instance — that goes without saying. There must also be agreed arrangements whereby in certain circumstances some units — by no means necessarily only British — could be temporarily withdrawn to support Western obligations outside Europe, in the SEATO or CENTO area for instance, or even to serve the interests of the free world elsewhere, as in the event of an attack by Indonesia on the Philippines or Malaya, or a renewed attack by China against India.

The Problem of Control

Finally I must refer to the key problem of the control of nuclear strategy. The thing that really bedevils this whole subject and is causing serious dissensions within the alliance is American insistence that

the ultimate control in this quite vital matter must remain in American hands and American hands alone -- the implication being (let us be frank) that their allies, except perhaps the British, cannot be trusted to handle these terrible toys. A distinguished American officer (General Ira Eaker) has recently described this attitude as being like a father saying to a retarded child "you can only have an air gun; if I gave you a .22 rifle, you might get into trouble." The United States really must come off this high horse -- must accept the truth of what that great French architect of Atlantic unity, Jean Monnet, recently told them. "You in the United States," he said in New York in January 1963, "must realize that the claims of Europe to share common responsibility and authority for decision on defense, including the nuclear weapons, is natural, since any decision involves the very existence of the European peoples." With respect, it is no answer to say that the Congress will not have it. The alliance is as essential to American security as that of anyone else; and if Congressmen persist in an attitude that makes no sense, they cannot blame others for adopting attitudes that make no sense -- and that may well end in the break-up of the alliance, as de Gaulle's reactions should have warned us.

Against the background of what I have said about our actually total interdependence in this business of nuclear strategy, I ask you to consider certain broad principles which I think I have learned from participation, at a pretty high level, in the working of a great alliance in war.

I submit that we only create unnecessary difficulties for ourselves when we insist on drawing blueprints in advance of exactly how decisions will be made in hypothetical circumstances, which are almost sure to be quite different if or when the time ever comes -- circumstances, anyway, which will never arise if the alliance remains solid and strong. The supremely important condition is the unity and willing cohesion of the alliance -- without willing cooperation an alliance simply does not work. To take a stand on rigid national positions, to insist in

advance on inflexible systems of command organization, only inhibits cooperation. If we are really allies, pulling together as a team, almost any system of control will work — however untidy it may look in a diagram; if we are not, then no system will work, however theoretically perfect it may appear on paper. And we only handicap ourselves unnecessarily and weaken the alliance by indulging in unreasonable fears about what might or might not happen if some one ally at the last moment were to go crazy enough to want either to go it alone or stand out alone. Written agreements, when the chips are down under the stress of war or the threat of war, have an unhappy habit of meaning very little — another lesson from June 1940.

Now, the MLF project is designed to give the European allies, and apparently the Germans in particular, a share in that responsibility to which Jean Monnet referred. I believe it would do no such thing. I personally know of no evidence that responsible Germans are desperately concerned about having personal control of nuclear weapons of their own; but if they become so, they will surely not long be satisfied with a small but expensive share in the manning and command of an insignificantly small and militarily useless fraction of allied nuclear power, of which the ultimate control still rests in American hands. I submit that the alternative I have proposed will give them and all the European allies a more real "share of common responsibility and authority for decision on defense, including the nuclear weapons" at far less cost than this expensive contrivance could ever give them.

To serve this end — though not for that reason alone — certain quite drastic modifications are necessary in the system of direction and control in NATO. The first, which is anyway long overdue, is a remodeling of the system at the top. The NATO Council must become a fully fledged Supreme War Council, strengthened on the civilian side for the proper exercise of political and economic control, and on the military side by reconstituting the Standing Group — transferred to

Europe — as the highest echelon of an executive military staff working under the political direction of the Council.

If or when it ever comes to the real rub — to the point of the supreme crisis with which NATO exists to deal — there will, I believe, be more time for consultation than is commonly supposed. But it would be unrealistic to pretend that the final irrevocable decision to go to war could be made by a unanimous decision of the whole Council. That, by the way, is the real crux of the matter, the decision to break off negotiations and accept the inevitability of war; the consequential decision on the first use of nuclear weapons, which of course must rest with the highest political authority, would depend on the course of events in the opening stages of hostilities — like the decision to initiate bombing of Germany in 1940. That dreadful decision must in the last resort be delegated by the Council to a small cell representing the major partners and, whether we like it or not, it makes no sense to deny that the primary agent in that decision can only be the President of the United States, as incomparably the strongest partner. But the man or the few men who have the appalling responsibility of decision to pull the nuclear trigger or snap on the safety catch, must be able to do so on a clear basis of agreed policy.

That is the essential point — that all the allies whose lives depend on the decision of those few men must have a common knowledge of all the factors that should determine that decision if the need ever arises; they must all have a share in the formulation of the strategic policy to govern that decision, and in the broad planning of the action to give effect to it, including the action of S.A.C. which should become a NATO force like everyone else. We made some limited steps in that direction in Athens and Ottawa; we must now carry them much further. Nobody pretends that will be easy, but it can be and has got to be done.

Lastly, there is one other major modification in the organization of the alliance which I believe to be of great psychological importance.

It is obviously indispensable that we should retain the most rigorous system of control at all levels to safeguard against unauthorized firing of any nuclear weapon. But the allies of the United States will never be satisfied that they have a real share in the responsibility and authority for the use of nuclear weapons, as long as the control of the two-key system and the permissive electronic link rests solely in American hands. That control should be transferred to a specially recruited corps of international control officers under a NATO control commission answerable to the NATO Council. Ideally that system should be extended to U.S. air and missile forces based in North America but that may be asking too much of the Congress, at least initially. It should certainly apply to all nuclear weapons based this side of the Atlantic, and I should like to see Britain give a lead by offering to place her nuclear weapons under the control of such a commission as soon as it could be formed.

This, I submit, is the way to satisfy all the allies that they have a real share in the responsibility and authority for nuclear strategy. It would be far more effective and economical, and could be brought to fruition much more quickly, than any new-fangled multilateral force.