Some Considerations Relevant to National Policy

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Peace is currently maintained by a delicate balance of terror. The delicacy of the balance has justifiably alarmed many of those who are aware of the awesome destructive power of nuclear weapons. A common response of intellectuals, military strategists, and statesmen alike to this alarm has been to focus their attention upon the problem of making the balance steadier and more durable. The interest in "arms control" and in the concept of "stable deterrence" reflects this focus. Although efforts to reduce the military insecurities of East and West are obviously laudable, I believe that the current emphasis on methods of stabilizing the mutual terror should be viewed as, at best, dealing with stopgap measures. The "hostile peace" of stabilized mutual terror and of institutionalized mutual suspicion is intrinsically vulnerable to the social and psychological maladies that breed in an atmosphere of tension and suspicion. We must begin to find roads to a peace rooted in mutual interests and mutual respect.

Thus, the basic theme of my paper centers on the question: How do we move from a peace of mutual terror to a peace of mutual trust? This question proliferates into many other, related questions, e.g.: What should our military policy be; what steps can we take to strengthen existing elements of international order; how can mutual suspicions be reduced; how can we learn to communicate with one another more effectively; what non-violent techniques for resolving international conflicts can be developed; how can the problems of a disarmed world be coped with? These are some of the difficult questions to which the social sciences must address themselves if civilization is to survive. Here, I cannot hope to do more than deal with some limited aspects of our military and international policy. For a

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1 The viewpoints expressed in this paper are the author's; they do not represent nor are they necessarily similar to the viewpoints of any institution or organization with which he is affiliated.
fuller discussion of these matters see Wright, Evan, and Deutsch (forthcoming).

Let me indicate in a brief, summary fashion some of the basic psychological assumptions underlying my discussion of national policy in this paper: assumptions which come from theoretical and experimental research that I have been doing on interpersonal trust and suspicion and interpersonal bargaining (Deutsch, 1949; 1958; 1960a; 1960b; 1961; Deutsch and Krazus, 1966).

1. There are social situations which do not allow the possibility of "rational" behavior so long as the conditions for mutual trust do not exist. I believe our current international situation is a situation of this kind. A characteristic symptom of such "nonrational situations" is that any attempt on the part of any individual or nation to increase its own welfare or security (without regard to the security or welfare of others) is self-defeating. Thus, for example, if the Soviet Union attempts to increase its security by taking over Berlin, it will decrease its real security by increasing the likelihood of nuclear war. In such situations the only way that an individual or nation can avoid being trapped in a mutually reinforcing, self-defeating cycle is to attempt to change the situation so that a basis of mutual trust can develop.

2. Mutual trust is most likely to occur when people are positively oriented to each other's welfare—i.e., when each has a stake in the other's doing well rather than poorly. Unfortunately, the East and West, at present, appear to have a stake in each other's defects and difficulties rather than in each other's welfare. Thus the Communists gloat over our racial problems and our unemployment and we do likewise over their agricultural failures and their lack of civil liberties.

3. To induce a mutual welfare orientation in another, you have to demonstrate toward the other that your own behavior is based upon such a premise and that he cannot improve his welfare by violation of it.

4. Another person is likely to be convinced that your behavior is guided by a mutual welfare orientation (i.e., more likely to be trusting) as a function of such factors as: the amount and frequency of the benefits he receives from your behavior; the confidence he has that your behavior has no other purpose than to provide mutual benefit. The other is most likely to perceive that your behavior is not guided by ulterior purpose if it does not result in disproportionate gain or loss for yourself and if your behavior is not seen to be determined by weakness, insanity, or insanity.

5. Another person is less likely to violate a mutual welfare orientation (i.e., less likely to be trustworthy) if he can trust you; if he knows what you consider to be a violation; and if he knows that you will neither condone a violation nor use an apparent one as an excuse for destructive retaliation but will, instead, attempt to restore cooperation without allowing yourself to be, or remain disadvantaged, by it.

6. Mutual trust can occur even under circumstances where the parties involved are unconcerned with each other's welfare. The presence of third parties who are "neutral" or who are valued in the same way (either favorably or unfavorably) may enable the development of limited forms of mutual trust. Thus, neutral nations, if they were sufficiently united and uncommitted, might facilitate communication or mediate conflicts between the East and West.

Military Policy

I shall discuss briefly two concepts: military superiority and stable deterrence.

Military Superiority

A public opinion poll would, undoubtedly, show that most Americans accept the traditional view that the security of the United States would be enhanced if we had a clear-cut military superiority over the Soviet Union. However, in the age of hydrogen bombs and missiles, the quest for military superiority is dangerous, provocative, and enhances the possibility of war. The basic axiom of military doctrine for both the United States and the Soviet Union in the missile age must be the recognition that military actions should only be taken which increase the military security of both sides: military actions which give a military superiority to one side or the other should be avoided. We should recognize that we have a positive interest in the other side's military security as well as in our own. The military forces of both sides should be viewed as having the common primary aim of preventing either side (one's own or the other side) from starting a deliberate or accidental war. Possibly, periodic meeting of military leaders from East and West might foster the mutual awareness of common concerns.

The assumption here, as I see it, is very simple: neither the United States nor the Soviet Union will allow itself to be intimidated by the other on a vital matter. If one side envisages that the other may achieve a temporary military superiority, it may be frightened into rash actions to prevent this from occurring. If one side feels it has achieved a temporary military superiority it may be emboldened to attempt to intimidate the other before the seesaw shifts its balance. We must recognize that just as military inferiority is dangerous, so is military "superiority": we neither want to tempt nor frighten a potential enemy into military action.

Stable Deterrence

The recognition that none of the participants in a nuclear war are likely to be victorious has led to the concept of stable deterrence.
through a balance of mutual terror. The essential idea is that if each side has a nuclear retaliatory capacity which has a high degree of invulnerability (i.e., a capacity to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the other side which is unlikely to be destroyed by a surprise attack), neither side would dare to initiate a nuclear war against the other.

The proponents of the theory of stable deterrence have made a very valuable analysis of the delicacy of the present balance of terror and have presented important suggestions for making the balance steadier. However, some of the sources of instability are inherent even in "stable deterrents," others inher in the atmosphere of tension and suspicion of the present "hostile peace." These latter sources of instability lead even some proponents of the doctrine of stable deterrence to neglect the mutuality of interest of both sides (i.e., that the weapon systems of the Soviet Union as well as those of the United States be equally invulnerable to surprise attack) which is implicit in the doctrine; it leads others who are not fully aware of the implications of the theory of stable deterrence to support such unsteadying viewpoints as the doctrine of "massive retaliation" and the doctrine of "instantaneous, automatic retaliation."

Below, we examine some of the assumptions involved in the concept of "stable deterrence" and indicate some of the instabilities which plague it. A stable balance of terror implies (at the minimum): (1) the mutual invulnerability of nuclear weapon systems; (2) the mutual vulnerability of civilian populations; (3) rational, responsible control over the use of the weapon systems including the ability to prevent accident, misunderstanding, insanity, or local decision as the basis for use of the weapons; (4) an unerring self-confidence in the face of potential attack or of an undeclared attack. Moreover, for the "balance of terror" to serve as a deterrent to an attack, it is implied that: (5) the threat of retaliation is credible to the potential attacker; (6) the threat is unprovocative (i.e., does not stimulate what it is attempting to deter) and is appropriate rather than unjust; (7) the potential attacker is neither masochistic (i.e., is not self-destructive) nor irrational (e.g., has grandiose delusions of invulnerability); (8) the attacker can be correctly identified. In addition, any doctrine which is concerned with stability should provide some compensating mechanism to restore stability when it is threatened or disrupted, e.g., to prevent a vicious spiral of mutual misunderstandings about whether a deliberate attack is taking place.

Let us now consider the implicit assumptions we have listed above to see how likely they are to be realized and to see if some assumptions don't inherently conflict with others.

1. Mutual invulnerability of weapon systems. As Herman Kahn (1960) has pointed out, if the present level of expenditure on research relating to military weapons continues, one can be reasonably certain that new, surprising weapons will be developed. Weapons which are now considered to be relatively invulnerable will become relatively vulnerable. Recognition of this possibility has led military theorists to the view that it would be dangerous to "place all their eggs in one basket"—i.e., to rely on one weapons system (e.g., the Polaris submarine) rather than upon a mixture of different weapons systems. However, without an effective agreement to limit and control weapons development, one may expect that, sooner or later, unpredictable research developments will make the balance of mutual terror teeter to one side or the other. Pessimistically, one may even say that an agreement which limits and controls weapons and their development, even if "fully-inspected," might not prevent an imbalance from developing unless the agreement expresses or produces the intention not to violate it. This is possible because the technology of inspection evasion could, under some circumstances, develop more rapidly than the technology of detecting incipient evasions.

2. Mutual vulnerability of populations. The "balance of terror" doctrine not only assumes that the nuclear weapons are mutually invulnerable but also that they are mutually effective. Anything which one-sidedly limits the destructiveness of the other side's weapons disturbs the balance. Thus, if one side begins to develop a large-scale civil defense program, the other side may feel that it will lose its ability to deter an attack since its retaliation will not be so fearsome. Yet, it is evident that there are strong pressures for a unilateral development of civil defense. Some of these pressures, oddly enough, originate in strong proponents of the doctrine of stable deterrence: they warn of the dangerous implications for world peace were the Soviet Union to initiate unilaterally a civil defense program against nuclear attack, but advocate that we do so unilaterally (Rand Corporation Study, 1958). Perhaps their recommendations are based upon the assumption that the Soviet Union has already initiated such a program; if so, this basis for our action should be clearly stated. My criticism here is not of defensive measures (whether they be anti-missile or civil defense) per se but rather of measures which are not mutual in orientation.

3. Rational, responsible control of the decision to use the weapons. One of the greatest sources of instability arises from the possibility that one side or the other will use nuclear weapons without having made a responsible decision to use them or will use them because of misinformation or misunderstanding concerning the other side. The fact is that the facilities for gathering and processing information, the communication network, the governmental decision-making apparatus, and the military command and control techniques required to make a quick decision to use nuclear weapons are extremely complex. It is very unlikely that any nation has the
capabilities necessary to make such a decision, which would not, in all likelihood, be regretted after the fact. Moreover, there is always the possibility that the decision to use the bomb would be made by an irresponsible local unit—by a "mischief" missile squad, a "grandiose" bomber crew, a "paranoid" submarine crew—which could carry out its own decision. As a social psychologist, I do not minimize the possibility of something which may be described as "collective madness" in times of acute international crisis. For reports of some studies of social behavior in situations of stress see Maccoby, Newcomb, and Hartley (1958).

4. Nervousness, the need to respond quickly because of the fear that one will lose either the desire or ability to respond, enhances the likelihood that a response will be triggered off by an insufficient stimulus and, thus, makes for instability. The proponents of "stable deterrence," of course, strongly oppose reliance on retaliatory forces which would be destroyed if not used quickly. Some of the "nervousness" in military circles arises, however, from the fear of loss of a desire to retaliate if deterrence has failed.

5. For a military threat of retaliation to deter, it must, at the minimum, have some credibility. The doctrine of massive nuclear retaliation in relation to non-nuclear aggressions lost much of its credibility after the Soviet Union acquired nuclear weapons systems. Of course, both the Soviet Union and the United States in contemplating the use of conventional military weapons also have to contemplate the dangerous possibility that a conventional war, out of its own dynamism, will mushroom into a nuclear war. However, neither we nor our Allies now believe that we would initiate an all-out nuclear war unless the facts showed we were in danger of all-out devastation ourselves. (See Kahn, 1960a.)

The implication of the foregoing is that, in the present situation, the threat of massive retaliation is itself largely deterred by the counter-threat of massive retaliation: deterrence is deterred. In a similar manner, one can argue that if one side has launched a surprise attack but has failed to wipe out the other side's nuclear striking force and has not done intolerable damage to its civilian population, the attacked nation would be deterred from a massive retaliation directed at its opponent's civilian population because of fear of counter-retaliation directed at its own population. Possibly thoughts such as those advanced in the preceding sentence have led to the doctrine of instant, automatic massive retaliation in relation to any nuclear attack: a doctrine seriously advanced by high ranking military leaders to insure the "credibility" of the threat. It is not necessary to dwell upon the great moral and physical dangers of being "nervous" and over-ready to kill 100 million or more people. Apart from the dangerous provocation and lack of control implicit in the concept of immediate and automatic retaliation, if attack and counterattack by missiles are not separated in time, how could the survivors know who started the war?

If we take the theory of stable deterrence seriously, the doctrine of retaliatory response to a nuclear attack would be a doctrine calling for an anxious, deliberate, delayed response which permits the nuclear aggressor to be identified unambiguously before the world and before its own people. Such a doctrine might encompass the threat of limited retaliation (of no more than an eye for an eye) to induce the people of the aggressor nation to overthrow their government and to surrender to the U.N. The threat of limited retaliation in relation to limited aggression, in addition to being more justifiable (i.e., less provocative) and less likely to result in unlimited catastrophe, is also probably more credible than the threat of massive retaliation in relation to limited destruction.

6. An effective threat does not provoke the events which it is trying to deter. Psychologists, sociologists, and psychiatrists, who have long been concerned with the prevention and control of antisocial behavior, would undoubtedly agree that one of the great dangers in the threat of force (in a "get tough" policy) is that it often incites the behavior it is attempting to prevent. There are several common reasons why threats provoke rather than deter: (a) the threat of using force is perceived to be an expression of an underlying intent to injure, rather than of self-defense (e.g., if a military leader boasts of his nation's ability to destroy an attacker, the statement is more likely to be seen as aggressive "rocket rattling" than as peaceful in purpose; (b) the threat of force is perceived to be an attempt unjustly to restrain actions which the threatened party feels entitled to engage in; (c) the threatened party has desire to be a "martyr" or to be punished; (d) the threatener is perceived to be bluffing; and (e) the threatener is perceived to be so irresponsible or incompetent that he cannot control the use or non-use of his threatened force and hence, the only way to control him is to destroy his capacity to threaten.

If we examine our recent and current policies to see whether they provoke or deter, we must conclude that some of our policies are not provocative. The placement of vulnerable nuclear weapons and missiles in Europe and the use of vulnerable overseas bases by bombers carrying nuclear weapons are highly provocative, because the weapons and bases would not survive a nuclear attack and, hence, could not be used as a retaliatory force: their only feasible use is to initiate attack. Brinkmanship, the reliance on the perceived possibility that limited conflicts (e.g., over Berlin and over Quemoy) might escalate to all-out nuclear war as a means of deterring limited war, and the search for information which would make the other side's
Some Suggestions for International Policy

But how does one create order out of potential chaos? How does one take the initiative in such an attempt? What rules and procedures should be developed? How can one be confident that the rules will be followed? These are difficult questions, but I venture to sketch an answer in the following paragraphs. It is self-evident that to facilitate the development of order and justice in international relations we must weaken the conditions which promote disorder and injustice and strengthen the conditions which promote the opposite state of affairs.

Weakening the Conditions Leading to Disorder

The major conditions leading to disorder in the present international scene are:

1. The revolution in military technology and the arms race. To overcome the dangers inherent in this situation we need to: (a) develop a counter-revolution in disarmament technology; (b) negotiate agreements and take steps unilaterally which will decrease military instability by preventing the diffusion of nuclear weapons, by reducing the fear of surprise attacks, and by reducing the likelihood of devastating incidents through accident, misunderstanding, or insanity; and (c) move toward disarmament theory and technology which permits a reliable disarmament. It seems to me unlikely that substantial disarmament will be feasible before a marked change has occurred in the international atmosphere. Consider only the unrealism of disarmament negotiations without the participation of Communist China.

2. The widening gap in standards of living between the rich countries of Europe and North America and the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, coupled with the increasing awareness of this difference and a rising "revolution of expectations." It is obvious that the rich countries have to spend much more organized, research-tutored effort in the attempt to assist people in the "underdeveloped" countries to acquire the educational, economic, and political skills and resources to become independent, thriving nations. I stress "independent" to emphasize the importance of not involving these underdeveloped nations in the cold war, the importance of allowing them to develop in ways which do not pressure them to be committed to one bloc or the other.

3. The existence of two organized crusading ideologies, one centered in the U.S. and the other in the Soviet Union, which emphasize their antagonistic interests while neglecting their mutually cooperative interests. I think it is the special duty of the social scientists in each "bloc" to expose the mythologies of each system, to

retaliatory force vulnerable to surprise attack are two examples of provocative policy. To be sure, military provocation is not limited to one side.

7. The theory of stable deterrence assumes that the potential attacker is rational in the economic sense that he will not attack if the expected gain resulting from the attack is smaller than the expected loss and if the expected loss from not attacking is less than that from attacking. Moreover, it assumes that the potential retaliator has a reasonably accurate conception of the nature of the potential attacker's complex system of values and disvalues. Both assumptions seem to be rather dubious. Behavior, particularly in a time of high tension and crisis, is more likely to be determined by anxiety, stereotypes, self-esteem defensive maneuvers, and social conformity pressures than by simple rational estimates of "economic" gain and loss. Further, there is little evidence to suggest that the Russians really understand us (or themselves) or that we understand them (or ourselves); certainly the Voice of America's conception of the Soviets is rejected by the Soviet citizens (see Bronfenbrenner, this issue) as is Pravda's conception of America rejected by us.

8. The theory of stable deterrence is a two-country theory. No one appears to have been able to think through what happens when nuclear weapons become an "N-country" problem. That is, the diffusion of nuclear weapons creates extremely complex problems for such concepts as stability and deterrence, problems which have not been solved. What would represent a stable distribution of nuclear weapons? Whom to deter?

The point of my discussion of the theory of stable deterrence is that: the notion that invulnerable nuclear weapons, in themselves, produce stability is a dangerously misleading notion. They do not. Stability depends also on many other considerations. Do not misunderstand me, however; my view is that if nuclear weapons are to be maintained, it is better that these weapons be invulnerable to surprise attack.

Let me summarize my discussion of military policy by stating that: the central point which we must grasp is that there is no rational solution possible to our problems of security in a non-rational world except to make the world more rational. We are in a type of international situation which is similar to that of a panicky crowd in a theatre where there is a fire. By attempting to achieve individual safety without regard for the safety of others, a person enhances the danger for all. In such a situation, the only reasonable course of action that will avert catastrophe is to take the initiative in creating order by persuasively suggesting rules and procedures which will permit an organized exit from the situation before the fire rages out of control.
accurately describe and analyze the complexities of each society, and to point out the similarities as well as the differences. Our analysis can not be content with such ideologically determined categories as “free enterprise system,” “Communism,” “Democratic,” “totalitarian.” This is not to deny that there are real and important differences between the United States and the Soviet Union, but we should attempt to understand these differences by objective analysis and description rather than by using political slogans as labels for very complex social systems. An objective analysis would see each society in an appropriate historical perspective in terms of the conditions which have given rise to and which maintain its particular institutions. In addition, such an analysis would point to the future by understanding the implications of the revolutionary changes in education, communications, industrial technology, and standards of living occurring in each society (see, for example, Rostow, 1960). Moreover, such an analysis would avoid the mythological tendencies which lead to the identification of oneself with the “angels” and the others with the “devils.” It is interesting to note that in the mythology of each nation, the other nation is essentially characterized as a social system in which “the many are voluntarily exploited by the few,” “the mass of the people are not really sympathetic to the regime,” “the government is dominated by groups who will attempt to impose their views upon the rest of the world, by force if necessary” (Bronfenbrenner, this issue).

Strengthening the Elements of Order

International order presupposes rules which effectively regulate the interaction among nations. Until there is a world government with sufficient power to coerce compliance with international rules, it is evident that powerful governments will comply with rules, whether they are formalized in treaties or not, only so long as they perceive that compliance is more beneficial than detrimental to their enlightened over-all self-interests. Any system of rules which is supported primarily through voluntary compliance is likely to be initiated and maintained only if sufficient communication among the potential participants in the system of rules is also maintained so that: (a) they can recognize that they hold certain values in common; (b) rules can be articulated which fairly represent the shared values, without systematically disadvantaging a given participant; (c) they can be reasonably certain that compliance is mutual; and (d) they can agree on procedures to resolve the misunderstanding and disputes about compliance which will inevitably occur. The ability of a system of rules to weather disputes and short-run disadvantages to a given participant is a function of the strength of the internal commitment to the system of rules and of the strength of the cooperative bonds that exist among the participants.

I shall employ this rather condensed presentation of “the conditions of normative order” to make some proposals for our international policy.

1. We must be unremitting in our attempt to communicate with members of the Communist bloc in such a way that the mutual recognition of our sharing many values in common (e.g., peace, technological advance, prosperity, science, health, education, cultural progress) is fostered. We should neither initiate nor reciprocate barriers to communication. Clearly our policy of noncommunication with Communist China makes no sense if we ever expect them to participate in arms control or disarmament agreements.

2. To develop a system of rules, our course of conduct in international affairs should exemplify supra-nationalistic or universalistic values; it should constantly indicate our willingness to live up to the values that we expect others to adhere to. We must give up the doctrine of “special privilege” and the “doeble standard” in judging our own conduct and that of the Communist nations. In my view, only a double standard would suggest that Communist China is aggressive toward us, but that we have not been so toward them; that the use of military force to maintain the status quo is peace-preserving while the use of force to change it is aggressive; that Communist bases near the United States are menacing while United States bases adjacent to the Soviet Union are peaceful; etc.

3. To cut through the atmosphere of basic mistrust which exists, the United States should engage in a sustained policy of attempting to establish cooperative bonds with the Communist bloc. I emphasize “sustained” to indicate that the policy should not be withdrawn in the face of initial rebuffs, which may be expected. Our policy should be to avoid the reciprocation of hostility and to always leave open the possibility of mutual cooperation despite prior rebuff. This means that we should have a positive interest in helping people in the Communist nations toward a higher standard of living and our trade policies should reflect this. It means that we should have an active interest in reducing their fears that they may be the victims of military aggression. It means, basically, that we should attempt to relate to them as though they were human. Relating to them as though they are devils, or some inhuman horde, will only help to confirm our nightmares.

The thesis of this paper has been that an orientation to the other’s welfare, as well as to one’s own, is a basic prerequisite to a peace sustained by mutual confidence rather than by mutual terror. “As well as to one’s own welfare” is underlined here to emphasize that loss of self-identity is a poor foundation for cooperation in inter-
national as well as in interpersonal relations. Thriving societies that are coping successfully with their own internal problems have less ground for the fears and less need for the hostilities that interfere with the international cooperation necessary to construct a civilized world for the genus man.

REFERENCES