

LIMITED WAR IN AN AGE OF NUCLEAR PLENTY

3 May 1957

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CAPTAIN SAUNDERS: General Hollis, and you gentlemen who are in the midst of the final problem: We have had two speakers talking about nuclear all-out war. This morning we are going to have a lecture for you on limited war in a nuclear area.

Sometimes you may wonder what those of us who are on the faculty do with our time. We read a great deal, and I commend it to you. In the process of so doing, we come across articles which appeal to us as presenting subject matter which we feel would appeal to you. In this process Mr. James King's article in the January Foreign Affairs appealed to us as something that we felt should be brought to your attention.

You have read his biography. There is one error in it which I feel should be corrected, because it means a great deal. Any of you who know about the First Division realize the pride there is in that division. Mr. King was with the First Armored Division, but went very soon after that to the First Division. So that is corrected.

I am very happy to introduce to this group Mr. James E. King, Jr., who will speak to us on Limited War in an Age of Nuclear Plenty. Mr. King.

MR. KING: General Hollis, General Calhoun, Ladies, and Gentlemen: My subject is the defense requirements of the nuclear age. In particular, it is the problem of limited war in the circumstance called "nuclear plenty." I shall begin with a brief description of this circumstance and then touch lightly upon the theory of deterrence, which has been developed as a defense prescription for the nuclear age. The time remaining will be devoted to limited war, its nature and conditions, and the defense requirements it generates, broadly conceived in terms of attitudes and objectives, as well as military means.

Nuclear plenty is Phase Three of the nuclear age. Phase One was our nuclear monopoly, which lasted from 1945 to 1949 or 1950. Phase Two was transitional. It was the period during which our nuclear advantage was still militarily decisive, though the U. S. S. R. was beginning to build up its weapons stocks. Phase Two did not long survive the explosion of the first Soviet H-bomb. Nuclear plenty, then, is Phase Three. It is the

situation that obtains when the imbalance of opposing stockpiles is no longer of decisive strategic significance, because there is enough on each side, given existing means of delivery and existing defenses, to be so destructive that neither side dares to take the risks of all-out war.

The strategic consequence of nuclear plenty is commonly called "nuclear stalemate," or "mutual deterrence." Its existence received tacit recognition at the very highest levels in the Meeting at the Summit in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 1955, when it was recognized that general war can no longer be regarded as an instrument of national policy by the great powers. Nothing has happened since, and nothing seems likely to happen--barring a technological breakthrough that would give defense against intercontinental nuclear attack an overwhelming advantage--to change the essential elements of the situation.

Dr. Vannevar Bush, a scientist who is intimately acquainted with the problems of national defense, has put it this way:

"As nearly as we can now see, we are entering a period of technical stalemate, in which great wars are unlikely to occur, though secondary wars fought with limited means may be a common occurrence. This seems, at least, to be the best that we can hope for at present. For no great war can ever again be won; it can only end with the partial or complete annihilation of both contestants."

Our national defense policy has been in process of gradual adjustment to this prospect for at least 12 years now. What has emerged from it to date is a policy called "deterrence."

To deter means to prevent something from happening by fear of its consequences. It is both active and passive; we may deter someone; we may ourselves be deterred. We are deterred if we are convinced that a proposed action is not worth the cost or the risks it involves. We presumably can deter someone else by convincing him of the same thing. The requirements of deterrence, as a defense policy, then, encompass two things: capability and credibility. Our adversaries must be convinced that we are capable of imposing intolerable sanctions, and they must be convinced that we will impose them.

It is on the score of credibility that the grand deterrent of thermonuclear attack capability fails to deter many Communist actions that we

should like to deter. The stalemate means that we believe that total war with the U.S.S.R. would be suicidal for us as well as for them. Consequently, we cannot expect the Russians to believe that we should retaliate for every hostile move they make if the only retaliation of which we are capable is suicidal. And if they do not believe it they will not be deterred. The logic of this has forced us to elaborate the theory of deterrence to account for lesser provocations.

The theory of deterrence, as elaborated, holds that we can deny the aggressor his "worth of winning" by making certain that he will recognize in advance that his move will cost him more than it is worth, while we can be sure, likewise in advance, that the deterrent sanction we propose will not cost more than it is "worth" to us. When you consider the difficulties of this two-sided calculus, it must be evident that the chance of miscalculation is high indeed. Nor can we be sure that near-perfect calculation will not justify the aggressor's aggression. In the case of Hungary, for example, the Russian worth of winning far surpassed our worth of winning--on no less authority than that of the President, himself.

The theory of deterrence was first developed by people who assumed that the possession of nuclear attack means gave us a decisive military advantage over the enemy. This being the case, we could provide an overwhelming sanction to take care of any margin of uncertainty, and to preclude any calculation that would justify aggression in any case in which we had a real interest. This has been changed by the advent of nuclear "plenty." The aggressor is now as free to put overwhelming force behind his aggression as we are to put overwhelming force behind our deterrence. Quite aside from the chance of miscalculation, which has so exercised Mr. Dulles, we cannot be sure that the aggressor's worth of winning will not sometimes be higher than ours and, if it is higher, we must expect, after we have put everything that we can into deterrence, that he will not always be deterred. We could still apply overwhelming force, but only of the kind that would, as James Burnham has said, "include ourselves in the target," because the enemy can retaliate in kind. This is what nuclear plenty means.

The word "deterrence" usefully expresses our purpose and aspiration to keep the peace. But let us not delude ourselves. The so-called theory of deterrence is no panacea. And it is dangerous to treat it as one. It suggests that we still enjoy the decisive military advantage that went out with nuclear plenty. The danger that lies in deterrence is that, by causing

us to misunderstand the nature of the problem we face, it may disincline us to adopt the attitudes and to take the steps that are required of us. I trust that both the nature of the problem and the danger of misreading it will emerge more clearly in the discussion of limited war to which I shall now turn.

The definition of limited war presents difficulties, which I do not mean to go into. The following rough definition will serve for the kind of limited war I am talking about. Please remember, also, that every time I use the phrase "limited war" I mean it to apply to the prospect of such a war as well as to the conflict itself.

A limited war, then, is a war in which opposing interests of the nuclear powers are substantially involved, but in which there is no question on either side that national survival is in jeopardy, and to which neither side is willing to commit more than a respectable fraction of its military resources.

This definition eliminates minor conflicts in which neither side in the cold war is interested. It also eliminates objectives such as "unconditional surrender" and all similar appurtenances of "victory" in the traditional sense. In addition, by stipulating that the major nuclear powers are only fractionally involved, it recognizes the existence of another commitment--the forces necessary to maintain the nuclear stalemate. Now, what is it that epitomizes these limited wars and war-producing conflicts? I think it is that they are conflicts that can properly be described as primarily political rather than primarily military.

The difference is one of immediacy to the issue of national survival. Every time the state exerts its power, in the general sense of the term "national power" that includes influence and persuasion as well as force, there is, of course, some question of national interest, and national interest always bears some relation to the issue of national survival. But the relation may be immediate or more or less remote. In general war, regardless of how it starts, the question of survival automatically becomes an immediate issue. Even after it becomes clear that there is little or no chance of losing, and consequently no further threat to survival, the pattern of conflict has been set and the war is still fought as though survival were at stake.

We fought two world wars to eliminate threats to our survival. Despite the disagreement and confusion that marked our entry into World War I, the one compelling reason was the argument that if the Kaiser

conquered Europe we should be next. Likewise, in World War II, it was because Nazi conquest of Europe and Japanese conquest of Asia would confront us with continental enemies on both sides that our entry into the war was probably a foregone conclusion, even if the Japanese had not attacked us and the Germans had not declared war on us.

The arm of the state that is peculiarly charged with its security, its protection against threats to its survival, is the military. Consequently, despite all the political and other considerations that enter into and influence our participation in a general war, once we are in it the military consideration becomes dominant. This is not to say that the military, as individuals or as a group, take over; our best militarists in time of war have been civilians. What it does mean is that the transcendent and preclusive value "military necessity" becomes the standard by which all our actions and objectives are measured. And, in the main, this is quite properly so, because in general war survival is the issue and military considerations must predominate.

In limited war, by definition and in contrast, survival is not an immediate issue. But the long-range interests of the state, which have an immediate bearing upon its place in the sun, but only an eventual effect upon its survival, are traditionally and properly in charge of nonmilitary elements. The trenchant directness and simplicity of measures appropriate to a fight for life are not appropriate to diplomacy, to the day-to-day relations of states, in which influence, persuasion, and bargaining play so large a part. In this area a certain indirectness is called for, and the measures required for step-by-step progress are anything but simple.

Limited war is limited because the objectives are limited. But, if the objectives are limited, survival is not an issue and military considerations are not paramount. Limited crises, then, and the limited wars that arise out of them, can best be regarded as points of extra or excessive tension along the line that marks the progress of the state towards its perhaps dimly perceived ultimate objectives by political means. When a crisis arises, when a conflict of this nature occurs, if the progress is to continue, political considerations must remain paramount, else all will be swallowed up in an unintended struggle for survival.

I am necessarily oversimplifying. National power, in the broad sense that measures the state's ability to have its way in the world, is immensely more complicated. For one thing, it is a compound of force and persuasion. Even with regard to those objectives that are obtained

by the consent of other nations the element of force is never wholly absent. It may be that our friendship and favor are sought because the force we dispose of makes it possible for us to be unpleasant; it may be that they are sought because our force serves to counter hostile force from other quarters. The generality of ends and actions that I am calling "political" does not exclude force; far from it. The distinction between "political" and "military" is not black and white. It is a matter of emphasis.

Despite these qualifications, however, the distinction is both substantial and inescapable. It has, in fact, often been the root of controversy in the past. Even in total war political considerations have had relevance, and sometimes actions that might have contributed to the defeat of the enemy have not been taken because of their anticipated undesirable consequences after the war. Likewise, in limited war, it would be absurd to say that primary or even purely military considerations have no application. The distinction emerges in sharp relief when a wartime policy can be criticized both on political and on military grounds, as was the case with "unconditional surrender" in World War II.

The term "military," then, abstracts and emphasizes a standard of national conduct that is perfectly familiar, though difficult to define. It is reflected in statements of the purpose of armed conflict, such as the following: **THE OBJECTIVE OF U. S. ARMED FORCES IN COMBAT WITH THE ENEMY IS TO DEFEAT HIS ARMED FORCES AND DESTROY HIS WILL TO FIGHT AT MINIMUM COST IN AMERICAN LIVES.** You will recall that one of our great commanders in World War II said that, on military grounds alone, beating the Russians to Berlin was not worth the life of one American soldier. You will recall also the advocacy of "hot pursuit" and the complaints about the "privileged sanctuary" of Communist fighter planes in the Korean War. These were all expressions of military purpose which, it can be argued, were at odds with political purpose. In World War II, by and large, the military purpose prevailed; in the Korean War, by and large, the political purpose prevailed.

My proposition, then, is that in limited war the broader political purpose must predominate, must not give way to "military necessity," must not subordinate other considerations to the military objective of victory over the visible enemy. If this is not the case the chances are very slim indeed that the war will be limited. Moreover, only broad political purpose can define for us the limits to the conflict, both in

geographical and in operational terms that best accord with our real interest, out of the alternative limitations that might be agreed to tacitly by the enemy. Finally, only such broad purpose can tell us what we may count as a "win" when we have eliminated the traditional military objective of victory.

It should be remarked, however, that this proposition applies only to the nuclear powers engaged in conflict. The Korean War was not thus limited to Syngman Rhee. Further, the proposition holds only because the major contestants have vast resources that are withheld so long as the conflict remains limited. If they could not convert the conflict into total war there would be less sense in the proposition, because some, at least, of their conflicts would be limited by capability.

The capability of converting a limited conflict into total war is peculiarly the product of nuclear plenty. But it is not exclusively the product of that circumstance. Limited wars have been fought before between major powers--the Crimean War between Britain, France, and Turkey on the one side and Russia on the other is an example; our own war with Spain is perhaps another. The fact is, of course, that most of the wars of the past were limited, in terms of purpose and objectives, as well as by limitation of the military means available.

To say that it is characteristic of limited war that broad political considerations predominate is not, of course, to say that limited wars must be fought by men in striped pants. Just as in total war our best militarists have been civilians, so some of our best political strategists are men who wear the uniform of the services. The point is not who will fight the action; the point concerns the principles and objectives that will govern the conduct of the action. It is not that the field commander and the political advisor will both be thinking in terms of limited objectives and in terms of predictable long-range effects.

You may have been wondering why we should get involved in all this. The answer is, unfortunately, that it is unavoidable. We do have the cold war, in which the moves are primarily political, though they involve measures of an economic or psychological nature, and though some of the pawns are military. The Communist world is driven by innate forces to expand; we are compelled to resist. Success or failure, on both sides, is cumulative. The success the Red Chinese were able to claim in Korea, for example, was an immense assist to the Communist cause throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. "If Vietnam falls," someone said, "Thailand, Malaya, and Burma will fall too, like a house of cards." Likewise in

Europe and the Middle East, Soviet penetration of Egypt's affairs, even to the extent to which that has so far occurred, has abruptly changed the face of things around the eastern end of the Mediterranean. On the other side, the defection of Hungary and the partial defection of Poland were mighty blows to Soviet prestige.

Properly considered, then, limited wars are but episodes of increased tension and irritation in this ceaseless striving to retain a political position and to gain political advantage. They arise out of moves made for political reasons, they are aimed at objectives that are meaningful only in terms of political advantage, and they must be fought, if fought at all, with a weather eye to the political consequences. In each such case, in present circumstances, the adjective "political" relates to the general and long-range balance of prestige, influence, and security in the cold war.

Great, general wars, the wars of survival to which we are accustomed and attuned by our own civil war and by two world wars, are epochal in nature. They change the course of history by determining which of rival powers and coalitions will have a chance to dominate the next period. It seems increasingly unlikely that such a war will again occur except by misadventure. It seems most unlikely that any great power can be so confident of winning a general nuclear war that it will deliberately choose to initiate a new historical epoch. But this circumstance does not alter the competitive spirit of mankind, nor satisfy its unrealized ambitions and aspirations. Power and will to power are not diminished. Instead, the day-to-day processes of expression and competition achieve new emphasis.

The demands upon our ingenuity to find ways of achieving our ends in this contest are extraordinary. Just now we are engaged in a great debate on foreign aid. All the best arguments for foreign aid, whether military aid or economic aid or technical assistance, relate to the fact that aid in these forms contributes to the success of our efforts in the international competition in which we are entangled. The means we employ in this competition are primarily peaceful, but so, we must admit, are those employed by our opponents in the cold war. Yet the contest is bitter and the stakes high.

Already on a number of occasions in the cold war there have been peaks of tension, and some of these have erupted into hostilities. If we turn our back on these eruptions, if we do not use our power in defense of our position, then, regardless of our success in those phases of the

contest that are peaceful, we stand to lose out in the end. And, as we approached that end, by a process of piecemeal erosion, eventually a time would come when our survival would be in jeopardy, because all our force and influence would have been dissipated, save only the ability to bring our world down in ruins. But there is another peril against which we must be fortified. It is at these same high points of tension, on which we cannot afford to turn our backs, that the inhibitions born of nuclear plenty may prove unbearably onerous. If in our impatience we lost sight of the essentially political nature of the conflict, if we allow "military necessity" to motivate our actions, and if we lift the limits of the conflict in order to achieve the satisfaction of victory, we can, indeed, end the contest, but only at the cost of eliminating the contestants--ourselves included.

We cannot win the cold war by military means alone. We cannot destroy international communism as we destroyed national socialism, because international communism is armed with weapons that would destroy us too. We cannot liquidate the cold war; we must live with it and fight it on terms that make sense.

I hope that what I have said already is sufficient to convince you, if indeed you need to be convinced, that we inhabit today an entirely new strategic environment which demands a revolution in our strategic thinking. I should agree that more questions have been raised than have been answered, and in this concluding section I hope to answer at least a few of these.

First, then, WHAT CONSTITUTES WINNING IN LIMITED WAR?

I have spoken of "worth of winning" as the aggressor's prime consideration. I have also said that winning in the sense of victory, as we have known it in past general wars, is ruled out in conflicts that are truly limited. How do we resolve the apparent paradox?

In principle the question has already been answered. A "win," so-called, is a gain in the cold-war balance of advantage. In this sense the Communist world won both in Korea and in Indo-China. In the former they gained no territorial advantage, but, by fighting the great power of the West to a standstill, they gained tremendously in prestige. In the latter case they even more clearly defeated a Western power, and did add a satellite to the Communist orbit. Oddly enough, both Korea and Indo-China can also be counted as wins for the West, as they have been, because, in the circumstances, given the political and

military advantages with which the Communists started, the outcomes could have been much more unfavorable. This is, of course, typical of any evaluation of political advantage. Even a provisional resolution of any limited conflict requires an element of agreement, of consent by both parties. And it is quite normal for both sides to claim the advantage. It only subsequently appears, often after many additional moves, whether one side really lost out.

This is a reason for arguing that in limited crises the outcome must almost always resemble a stalemate. It is also a reason why these outcomes are emotionally so unsatisfactory to people whose strategic notions have been nourished in general war. There is something almighty satisfying about crushing the enemy, occupying his capital, and guiding his recovery--despite the sour reactions that result when we learn that even so, things do not entirely go our way. In contrast, it is downright frustrating to have to accept a settlement in which the enemy can claim that he has won.

From this I believe we can draw three important morals: First, the prior moves, before the conflict results in hostilities, are even more significant than the war that may follow. Second, the side that is physically in position enjoys a tremendous advantage. Third, we must not be timid.

On the first moral, both sides will certainly endeavor to avoid the risks inherent in any armed conflict these days; consequently both will seek to gain the desired advantage by peaceful means. This is why we have a cold war--it is what both sides are doing with weapons drawn from their political, economic, propaganda, and military arsenals. It is only if one side or the other miscalculates, or if the aggressor expects to gain significant advantage, that hostilities will occur. And certainly the aggressor will try to prepare the way so that his chances in combat will be good. Likewise, it is our appointed role, taking advantage of his reluctance to enter into even limited hostilities, to discourage him by assuming defensive, or, if you like, deterrent postures that indicate to him the difficulty of achieving his objectives with an effort prudently limited.

As has always been the case in limited conflict, of course, if we have not made appropriate preparations we can lose before the first shot is fired. The situation in old style general war was different, because if you had the military power, you could wait until the aggressor had pushed you too far and then recoup all your earlier losses by liquidating him.

This brings us to the second moral. The aggressor must either try to worm his way into position and into possession, as he will do when the prospect is for guerilla action or civil war, or, if his peaceful efforts fail and he decides to resort to force, try to complete his military moves rapidly, and present the world with a fait accompli. There is nothing new about this except the increased inherent risk of general nuclear war. But this increased risk, which makes for reluctance to take up arms, puts a tremendous premium on being in position. This is the legitimate purpose of our troops in Western Europe and of our Seventh Fleet in the far Pacific.

But, as the aggressive side cannot, in general, be denied the initiative, it is incumbent upon us, in those cases in which we are not in position, to be able to react rapidly, with sufficient appropriate force, to counter the aggressor's initiative. It is because this requirement for rapid reaction is widely recognized that the mobile response potential of our nuclear air power has been emphasized. It is because that particular type of response does not always appear to be appropriate that the need for air transport of our ground forces has been emphasized.

The third observation that I have referred to as a moral is a commonsense qualification. Both in the preparatory phases and in the armed showdown, if we are timid we are licked. We must always remember that the risk of general war is at least as mortal to the aggressor as to us.

At this point I could go into a long discussion of the tacit limitations of the Korean War. Our acquiescence in some of them has been bitterly criticized, even by people who are thinking constructively about the problems of limited war. I think, myself, that most of these criticisms are wrong, particularly those that relate to the form of the contest and the limitation of its geographical scope to Korean territory. The privileged sanctuary of Communist fighter planes beyond the Yalu, for example, was matched by the equally privileged sanctuary of our bombers on Okinawa and elsewhere, even of our fighter planes on Korean airfields. The security of the Communist Manchurian base was matched by the security of our ports and our shipping. It seems to me that the irreducible condition of limitation in this case was that the war not become a Sino-U. S. or a Sino-UN war, and that the Russians and Chinese very definitely connived with us to make that a certainty. But, within the limits laid down, I agree that we made mistakes, one of which was to relieve pressure on the Communist armies when they offered to negotiate a ceasefire. The military problem of limited war is to achieve as soon as

possible a tacit agreement on the limitation of its scope and then to seize boldly upon the military opportunities that are offered within that limit. Understandably, in this first experiment with limited war in the nuclear age, our performance was somewhat less than satisfactory on both counts. We did observe the irreducible limit to which I referred a moment ago, but we made the mistake of leaving the other side in doubt regarding the limit we should observe within Korea itself and, when this resulted in the Chinese coming in, perhaps we did become overcautious and fail to press our military advantages home.

As a further comment on the point about timidity or caution, it should also be said that we do not have to accept the other side's minimum tender regarding the scope of the conflict. This is what is valid in saying that we shall react "in places of our choosing." Obviously, each side will seek the limitation in scope that is most favorable to it. We do not have to confine our reaction to the geography where the aggressor prefers to fight. But, at the same time, we cannot expect to choose freely the ground that is most favorable to us. Again there must be an accommodation, though a tacit one. And this again emphasizes the importance of what goes before, because one of the aggressor's intentions will certainly be to set the conflict up so that it will be fought on ground of his choosing. To insist that we will not go along may indeed be a way of deterring him, but only if the scope we project is within reason. If the best we can do is to hint that we shall drop H-bombs on Moscow or Peiping to defend Baghdad or Bangkok, it is rather unlikely that our deterrent will pass the test of credibility.

I can summarize the answer to the first question, then, by saying that to win in limited war must be rather like conducting a successful negotiation with another state. We must derive our satisfaction from the long-range benefit to our interests, and not be overly chagrined if the enemy can claim, with some color of justification, that he was the winner. Given such an expected outcome, the significance of the preparatory moves on both sides is notably increased, and, if we are outmaneuvered during this phase, the best possible remedy is to be able to move rapidly but appropriately during the combat phase. Finally, in all phases, overcaution is as misguided as irresponsible temerity would be.

This, then, is what it means to win in limited war. At the risk of oppressing you with repetition, let me point out again what it does not mean. It does not mean victory in the sense of destroying the enemy,

or gaining control of him so that his future can be dictated. This is what he cannot be expected to permit if he can help it; and, with nuclear weapons in plentiful supply he obviously can help it.

The second question is one on which I have already touched a number of times: **WHAT IS THE APPOINTED ROLE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LIMITED WAR?**

One possible answer, I believe, will stand almost without challenge. Just as the existence of two-sided capability of launching a general thermonuclear attack deters that kind of war, it seems reasonable to argue that there is a good likelihood that the possession of nuclear weapons by both sides can be used to deter their employment in limited conflicts. The reason is that general nuclear war is implicit in the employment of nuclear weapons. Their nonemployment is the most obvious of all possible limits.

The distinction between nuclear and nonnuclear war is one that everyone can understand. It is a distinction, furthermore, that is proof against inadvertent violation and possibly fatal misunderstanding. It is sharp, clean, and convincing. I am aware that many people insist that the employment of nuclear weapons can be kept limited, but they realize that they are on the defensive and must justify their position. So, without taking further issue with them at the moment, I suggest the possibility that the appointed role of nuclear weapons in limited war is to keep nuclear weapons from being used.

It has been said, in all seriousness, that nuclear weapons will be used, because, even if a conflict starts conventionally, neither side will go down in defeat with unused nuclear power in its arsenals. I want to direct your attention to the word "defeat." Ignoring for the moment the question whether nuclear war can be limited, assuming in fact, that it can be limited, the proposition, as stated, simply denies the possibility of limited war, and consequently is a historical absurdity. For, if nations will not admit defeat without using nuclear weapons, they also will not admit defeat while using nuclear weapons; and the same argument that denies the possibility of limiting war by eliminating the use of nuclear weapons also denies the possibility of limiting nuclear war itself. If neither side will accept anything less than victory, if neither side will admit even limited defeat--even though the latter may be glossed over by claiming political gains, as I mentioned earlier--there cannot be limited war between nuclear powers.

As applied to general war, the proposition that neither side would accept defeat without using its nuclear weapons is true, but trivial. No one supposes that an unlimited, general, or total war between the nuclear powers could be anything but a nuclear war to the finish. But the point of limited war is that it is not a war to the finish; and surely it must be obvious that in limited war the winner--I repeat, the winner--not the loser, would be committing a crime against himself if he were to press the loser so far as to convert the limited engagement into total war. This is the loser's ultimate safeguard. So long as he retains his capacity to destroy the winner in total war, he need not fear for his survival in limited war. The limits must be drawn so as to protect this capacity and thus eliminate the issue of survival from the conflict entirely. Henry Kissinger has suggested one way that this must be done: The reserves for general war, on both sides, must be inviolable in limited war. They must not be used and they must not be attacked.

There are some people, including some in positions of great responsibility in our Government, who are on record as saying that, leaving aside "brush fires," we cannot afford to become involved in a limited war in which we cannot use our "best weapons." To me there are at least two considerations that bear substantially on the question whether we should use nuclear weapons or not; before we decide what we can and cannot afford. The first is whether nuclear war can, in fact, be limited. I have already mentioned this. My own position is one of deep skepticism. But the question is one that, at this point, each must decide for himself. The other consideration is whether nuclear weapons are appropriate in limited war, even if their employment can be limited.

Are these weapons of mass destruction compatible with the political objectives of limited conflict? A little while ago there was a lot of talk around Washington about the manpower we could save, or about the ease with which we could balance the massive manpower of the Communist world, by augmenting our fire power with nuclear weapons. But the reluctance of our European allies to be defended by means of a nuclear holocaust, even a "tactical" nuclear holocaust, began to inspire second thoughts on this subject a year or more ago. Moreover, the recent experience of the Middle East crisis has made a lot of people think about what is and what is not appropriate in such cases.

Limited wars are quite likely to occur in real situations, where there are real people whose interests and preferences have to be considered. Some of these conflicts may be guerrilla actions; perhaps most will be civil conflicts; or they may be wars between sovereign states. All will

be, both for the Communists and for ourselves, the continuation of politics by other means, which is what general nuclear war most decidedly is not. The actions we take during hostilities must not be allowed to defeat our ultimate purposes. You do not persuade people to choose democracy rather than Communist dictatorship by dropping atom bombs on them. You probably would not choose to hold one corner of the Middle or the Far East at the cost of alienating all the rest. If you survey the trouble spots in which hostilities may occur, you will see for yourselves that in few of them are our "best weapons" appropriate.

The next question I want to consider concerns the scope of limited war. **WHAT SIZE LIMITED WARS SHOULD WE BE PREPARED FOR?**

I have already suggested that the possibilities run the gamut from guerrilla operations to full-blown, though still limited, wars between states. The in-between cases are not difficult. Let us look at three of the extremes.

The role of guerrilla conflict in the cold war has been noted widely, often with the conclusion that it is not a problem for the Armed Forces of this Nation. Even when legitimate interest is conceded, the emphasis is too much on fighting guerrillas, on counter guerrilla action. We need a lot of new thinking on this subject.

The fact is that, whereas it takes something like 20 regular soldiers to fight one guerrilla--if the experience of Korea, the Philippines, and Malaya is a sound guide--no guerrilla action has ever prospered that did not enjoy substantial local popular support. Guerrilla warfare then, is preeminently political. Guerrilla warfare is possible only if the political regime within a country is so unstable or so disliked as to have alienated a large part of the population. Therefore, in combating guerrilla actions against us, our aim should be primarily at the population, and only secondarily at the guerrillas, as Magsaysay so brilliantly demonstrated in the Philippines. But there is another great unexplored possibility. It not uncommonly happens that the population is favorable to us and hostile to Communist overlords. We should think, then, of guerrilla operations as a positive device, probably the least risky, though perhaps the most uncongenial to our temper, of all the ways of conducting limited war.

At the other extreme, it is sometimes stated with magisterial authority that limited war between the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. is impossible. As the Secretary of Defense said last summer, "I do not think there is

going to be any little war with the Russians. I think if the Russians and the Americans are ever in war in any small place, it is going to expand very rapidly into a terrible war." Possibly it would. I feel myself that this is just about the last ditch for both sides. And just for that reason I think it is a rather unlikely contingency. The Russians have demonstrated their facility for camouflaging their participation; I should suggest that we think of doing the same. But, though the risks inherent in such a conflict are very high indeed, it need not follow that they are risks we cannot run under any circumstances. If we allow that to become the case, we shall merely encourage the Russians to participate openly. I think we should let it be known that we have explored the implications of war limitation; that we are convinced that war can be limited; and that, if necessary to the defense of our position, we will fight such wars against any and all comers.

There is entirely too much talk these days about what is going to happen, and much too little about what we are going to let happen. Because nuclear weapons have changed our premises it does not follow that our intellect and our will are paralyzed. We must seek to understand what is possible, and then to work at controlling events. The craven attitude that all is predestined leads to fatalism or to an equally fatuous optimism. Some say that nuclear weapons are going to be used, without limit, solely because they exist, and that we might as well be prepared to sell our existence dear. Others argue that nuclear weapons will be used because they exist but that their employment will somehow be automatically limited, because unlimited employment would be unthinkable. Still others adopt the unbelievable view that wars will just not happen, because nuclear weapons have made the prospect too horrible. I hope I have said enough to persuade you, if you needed persuading, that none of these is a necessary or an intelligent response of the human spirit to the greatest challenge it has ever faced.

Another extreme case I shall touch on very lightly. It concerns the larger limited wars. It has been said that we shall never again become involved in a war as big as the Korean War without using our "best weapons." If this means that whatever limitation we accept on such a war must include the use of nuclear weapons, I have already presented my objections. If it appears that the use of nuclear weapons can and will be limited, and if their employment is appropriate to the immediate circumstance, the argument is not incompatible with the requirements of limitation. But, if it means that we shall never again fight another war as big as the Korean War without going into it to win a MacArthurian

victory, I take my leave. Compared to what general war in the age of nuclear plenty promises to cost, the Korean War was dirt cheap, in lives and in treasure. To take our chances of survival under a rain of thermonuclear bombs and missile warheads rather than to expend the effort necessary to achieve a limited settlement in any war, no matter how big, would be insanity.

One final question, and then I am done: **WHAT FREQUENCY OF LIMITED WAR DO WE NEED TO PREPARE FOR?**

You wouldn't expect me to answer this one, but I should like to correct a possible false impression. What I have been saying may have given the impression that I think there will be a limited war of one kind or another annually from here on out, and that we shall be in most of them. That is not my intention. I feel that the risks inherent in general war, and the risk of general war in any war, no matter how limited, may well make war itself less frequent. Moreover, I do not mean to assert that we must participate every time there is an exchange of small-arms fire anywhere in the world. But limited war in the circumstance of nuclear plenty is a real problem, the requirements of which are exacting and are still largely unfamiliar. To meet them we need to be prepared emotionally, philosophically, politically, and militarily.

Our defense problem in the age of nuclear plenty, then, is twofold. We must maintain our strategic power, enough of it so that any prospective enemy must believe that he cannot survive a war in which it is employed. In other words, we must maintain the mutual deterrence to prevent general war. But, equally, we must be prepared to exert our force in limited conflicts. The two requirements are parallel. Neither is prior in any true sense. We must have both. We face destruction if we let ourselves become incapable of an annihilating stroke. But we can just as surely be destroyed piece by piece if we cannot handle the so-called "little" threats. It might take longer, but probably not much. I cannot see us sitting idle while our foundations are chiseled away.

Advances in transportation and communication have made a smaller world, into which the tremendous destructiveness of nuclear weapons must be crowded. Someone has suggested that the U. S. and the U. S. S. R. are like two deadly enemies locked in a small room, each armed with a hand grenade. The problem we have been exploring suggests that the analogy should be refined. Our enemy also has a knife. If we do not

provide ourselves with a weapon to parry his strokes we can be cut to ribbons, with no defense that is not also suicide. If we do provide ourselves with such a weapon, and use it well, not only shall we have a defense against indignity and eventual disaster, but also we may yet find a way out of the room.

Thank you.

CAPTAIN SAUNDERS: I am sure you do not realize that it is not as simple as just providing the Air Force with a knife. Mr. King is ready for the questions.

QUESTION: Mr. King, would you comment on the recent decision of the British within the context you have presented to us--the implications of that?

MR. KING: You ask me to comment on the recent British White Paper. The lesson seems to be that in this troubled world only the major powers can act in these limited situations with freedom. I would refer you to The Economist--I believe it was April 13. It devoted about 10 or 15 pages to the analysis of the White Paper. Of course I was quite gratified to see that they supported my analysis.

The British have surrendered their freedom of action. The Suez War was a painful lesson. It proved to them that, in the nuclear age in which they can be confronted with the annihilating threat of an opposed nuclear power, they can not act in their imperial interest in these small problems without our support; and, in any case where we will not support them, they are sunk. They had two alternatives. They could devote their resources to conventional capability, if you like, including limited atomic capability, in order to maximize their imperial power, at the expense of playing a part in the strategic confrontation. They chose to do the opposite thing, which is to maintain as big a stake as possible in the strategic stalemate, because that gives them some say in what we do. Churchill, in his great speech of 2 March 1955, laid this down very explicitly. He said, in effect, "If we are not capable of attacking some of these targets, some of the targets may not be attacked, and those targets may be fatal to us."

QUESTION: Sir, granted that the United States might accept your thesis, which I may say I do, that we will fight limited wars, that we hold the hand grenade in one hand and the knife in the other, with the will to fight with the knife as long as they will, do you think our adversary is convinced that we will be willing to do it, so that they will hold off?

MR. KING: Well, I think the argument is convincing, myself. I just don't think there's any escape from it. What's their alternative? Unless the facts are wrong, unless the diagnosis is wrong--they are certainly not going to make a deliberate choice to bring destruction down on their GNP and their population.

Of course each side is capable of toying with the threat of general nuclear war. What use can you make of it? That's what the Russians are doing now, for example. They are talking about blasting Western Europe with hydrogen bombs. But we were doing much the same thing a couple of years ago, though more in the direction of Red China. We set a pretty bad example. I don't think their talk amounts to much, unless we make the mistake of committing ourselves in advance to an inability to fight in a limited fashion. That is what really worries me about what is going on at Bad Godesberg at the moment--the influence of the British decision, for example. If the problem is misinterpreted and we find ourselves with no capability of fighting a limited action, then we are really left with only two alternatives: You either can't have a war at all, and, as I look at history, that is fantastic; or you have to have a war that nobody can survive--so the Western Hemisphere and Western civilization just throw in the towel. There's got to be some middle way. We've got to gain time. We do not yet have a world community in which these things can be resolved in courts of law. We've got to gain the time to develop that kind of world. Otherwise, in my humble opinion, thermonuclear weapons and civilization are incompatible.

QUESTION: Mr. King, I would like to carry that on just a little further. It seems to me that the thing that should worry us is the fact that maybe the enemy can defeat us with the knife. This is what I think we were worried about before. We were outmanned by the enemy, and therefore we turned to the nuclear weapon. Do you think this is a real danger, and something that we should really worry about, the fact that, if we choose to fight with the knife, the enemy will welcome this, thinking that he can defeat us with it?

MR. KING: Of course it's a real danger. That is how we got ourselves into this box in the first place. We were unwilling to make the effort, because at that time nuclear weapons were an advantage. They were a very decisive advantage. All we had to do was talk about them. I think the thing we've got to recognize is that they are no longer that kind of advantage. And actually we are not "outmanned" in fact, only in determination.

Now, the prospect is not as bad as it looks. It is certainly not as bad as it looked, say, two years ago. We used to talk about 175 Russian divisions, and we added to those God knows how many satellite divisions. The situation in Western Europe is now such that the satellite divisions can probably be marked off the slate. Furthermore, you probably have to put aside a Soviet reserve more or less equivalent to the satellite divisions in order to keep the satellite divisions from joining us. This is, of course, provided we are strong. They will not join us if we are weak.

Of course it is possible to go too far, to be too optimistic about this; but, if you look at it critically, the Russians have 20 divisions in East Germany. Any additional divisions, and moreover the supply for the 20 divisions and any additional divisions, would have to pass through Poland. Whatever they can move through Poland and support through Poland is probably the only strike force the Russians could count on, and it may well take 20 divisions to keep the East Germans under control.

You can be too optimistic and say the Russians don't really have any Red Army attack capability in Western Europe. I wouldn't go that far. They still have enough to cause us real concern if we don't do something about it. But you are not talking about the necessity for 100 conventionally armed World War II-type divisions, ready for a surprise attack. Twenty-five divisions, with a dual capability--you've got to have a dual capability, because obviously you can't let the Russians win by default, as they could if our troops had no nuclear weapons--properly armed with both types of weapons, properly disposed and flexible in their employment and in their thinking, which is even more critical, would stop the Russians cold.

You talk about a deterrent--there's a deterrent for you. They cannot be sure that they can get 50 divisions, or even 25 divisions, across that front and support them effectively.

I would suggest that we do something else. I say that we should go on the offensive in all of this, and we can go on the offensive if we stop feeling so defensive about it. We should exploit the fear that the Russians have about the stability and the reliability of the satellites. We should have a command in Western Europe for the purpose of supporting and perhaps even commanding the satellite troops when, in the event of war, they came over to our side. And at the appropriate time I'd let everybody know about it, too. Give some four-star general such a command, and

he will do something about it. But select a four-star general with political savvy and discretion too.

QUESTION: Mr. King, to extend that a little further, what do you think about organizing the military forces of this country to parallel those two major missions, instead of our traditional organization of combat media--land, sea, and air?

MR. KING: I suppose that's a reference to Henry Kissinger's article in the April Foreign Affairs. I think it is an excellent idea. About three years ago I made a sort of wild-eyed suggestion that we set up a separate establishment--I called it a department, because I couldn't think of a good word--a department of retaliation, of deterrence, to maintain what Bernard Brodie has called the "constant monitor," to keep things from being used. I think Henry's proposal, which is the same thing in essence, is much more practical. He may very well have made a suggestion that will overcome the problem of interservice difficulty, which of course is a real problem.

QUESTION: About the distinction of weapons, now, we are using a knife figuratively. I would like to ask a double-barreled question. How do you define "conventional" in the era of fractional KT weapons? If we arrive at this stalemate in small nuclear weapons, as well as large, what sort of weapon systems do you picture as being appropriate? I would like to concentrate on air systems.

MR. KING: Well, I use the word "conventional" in a conventional sense. When I say "conventional" I mean prenuclear, or nonnuclear, or antinuclear. I guess that's the first part of your question.

I think that, no matter how fractional you make the atomic weapon, the distinction between a nonatomic weapon and an atomic weapon is one you can't escape. Even if you have a little bang you are going to have a little mushroom cloud, and this is a figure that everybody has got engraved on his brain these days. Also, I don't think that these gradations are reliable as a test of limitation or as a means of limitation. The distinctions are just too liable to slippage. Theoretically, an atomic bomb can be designed from a .5 KT or lower, all the way up to whatever your means of delivery can handle--100 megatons or something. And theoretically these gradations can be continuous, like a rheostat.

I feel that, if we are involved in a limited atomic war and the general in command says to the President, "We can't beat these guys with 20-KT

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bombs because they are using 100-KT bombs," the President is not going to send for MIT or ORO to go out and make a test. He's going to make up his mind, and he will probably say, "O. K., you're the boy on the spot, you've got the problem, you know what it is. Go ahead and use 100-KT bombs."

That's the problem there. On the question of the tactical stalemate, I think that you can make a pretty good argument in a situation like the defense of Western Europe that you can achieve a tactical atomic stalemate--but, only by assimilating that stalemate to the strategic stalemate. We had this problem in a study that a group of ORO people made. They had developed a plan for the atomic defense of Western Europe, and we people on the Review Board said, "What's your concept, what's your justification of all this?" Well, they came up with a concept that made a lot of sense up to a point, and the concept was this: If you can employ tactical atomic weapons, and the other side has got them too, it is a reasonable hypothesis that he will employ them, too.

Now, of course you are not yet fighting a nuclear war. You are thinking about it, and how to deter it. So you imagine a theoretical, hypothetical "tactical" exchange; and the exchange gets bigger and bigger, because, every time you up your ante he ups his ante. What happens? Eventually you get to the point where it makes no difference whether you are dropping nuclear bombs from B-52's that took off from Texas or whether you are shooting them with Honest John's and corporals over the line--the effect is the same. So, what you are saying in effect is, "We're not going to let you make a distinction between the thermonuclear stalemate and this little tactical thing. We'll just set it up so that there is no distinction, and you can't attack us."

The fallacy in that is that, just like the thermonuclear stalemate, it deters us, too. So he comes over the line and says, "O. K., boys, I'll attack with machine guns, rifles, and 105-millimeter shells, and, if you want to hit me with nuclear bombs, go ahead, but I'll hit you with nuclear bombs, too. Then you know what will happen--you'll use more, I'll use more, you'll use more, and I'll use more, and before long we've got an intercontinental thermonuclear exchange and we'll both go up in smoke." So we are back where we started. Our European allies don't want to be annihilated and they have difficulty believing we do. So what good is a "tactical nuclear" defense, other than to deter a "tactical" nuclear attack? It turns out that a "tactical" stalemate is no better deterrence against limited conventional attack than is the strategic stalemate.

Either one will work if we can make the aggressor believe what we say. But do we believe it ourselves?

How do you get around that problem? I think you've got to have an alternative; and the alternative is defense with conventional weapons.

In the article that my introducer referred to so charitably, I made a very strong point of the argument that conventional war itself has to be limited. I do not think, for example, that strategic air power has any real role to play in the limited conventional war in this age. You could use tactical air power, of course, and you could use strategic bombers for some purposes, probably, if you want to bomb railroad terminals, or something of that sort. But certainly you can't expect to have fire-bombing raids such as we had on Tokyo, Kobe, and so forth. In a nuclear age, when the other guy has got nuclear weapons, he will use them on you if it gets too hot. But this works both ways, of course. I doubt if he can expect to use his planned fleet of 1,200 subs, say, to starve the British. I feel sure that the other side realizes that they've got the same problem, which is to set it up in advance so that war can be limited. And I think there would be a tremendous role for tactical air in its traditional supporting role with conventional weapons, or with small nuclear weapons in the cases where limited nuclear war looks like an acceptable risk.

QUESTION: Sir, I may be covering some ground that has been covered; but we have recently in the Government been cutting down on the ground forces; we have been streamlining the Army and converting it into a so-called pentomic defense. It seems to me that, by doing that, we place more and more reliance on the nuclear striking power of the ground forces. I assume that we will still have certain conventional fire power which would be good against some rather weak enemy; but it seems to me that, by changing the scope of our ground defense, we have sort of painted ourselves into a corner; so that, if we are going to fight against Russia, the only way we could win against their troops would be to use nuclear weapons. So, doesn't that sort of come down to the conclusion that we could not fight a limited war in which United States and Russian troops faced each other?

MR. KING: Well, I think there are two answers to that. In the first place, even if it is true, it is not necessarily the right thing to do; and the trend is reversible. However, the trend you mention is what has been exercising me for the last three years. On the other hand, the trend is not yet preclusive. If you read General Taylor's directives on all this

new planning, you will be struck with the fact that in every case he has specified that the new force must be both atomic and conventional. The new environment certainly demands highly mobile, light forces, in the sense of light logistical support. In the kind of limited wars I am thinking about, for example, it would just be nonsense to employ masses of troops. It would be doubtful that even the degree of massing that was characteristic of Korea would happen again. It might. My crystal ball is a little cloudy.

But you certainly have got a problem of dual capability. The most disturbing thing I run into, and, from my point of view, the most disgusting, is when one of our scientific military "experts" comes up with the flat statement that you can't have both; that you've got to have either an atomic nuclear force or a conventional force; and for this reason we've got to commit ourselves to nuclear war. I think this is not the statement of a conclusion, but a very good statement of a problem. Obviously there are difficulties. The pentomic, or pentana, division was deliberately designed to serve the dual purpose. I don't think the problem is insoluble. I don't think, for example, that the number of forces that we have to have overall is anything like what it used to be. At one time not too long ago we had a mobilization base which I believe has been cut drastically. It should be cut drastically. My concept is that we should have something like 20 divisions available for immediate use, and another 20 divisions in the Reserve echelons that could be brought in to replace those 20 divisions if we had to use them. I certainly think that we should be prepared to fight at least two small wars simultaneously; because, if we weren't, it would be an invitation to the Russians to stir up the second one after they got the first one started.

QUESTION: Mr. King, if we go back to the two men in the room, each one with a hand grenade in his hand, where you allocated one man a knife and then arbitrarily allotted the other man a knife, I would like to think of a different approach, such as jujitsu, and see this man take the knife away from the other one. What I am referring to is--isn't there some area that we haven't explored yet, an area where maybe we don't have to use explosives? Maybe we can use some other device. Do you have any views on that area, thinking in terms mostly of education?

MR. KING: Well, one of the things I had to leave out because the lecture turned out to be a little too long for the time, was my guesses about the frequency of this kind of war. I don't suggest that we are going to have one of these things annually from here on out, or that we will have to jump in every time there is an exchange of small-arms fire anywhere

in the world. But I do think we have to be prepared for the employment of force. It is only by being prepared that you can minimize the likelihood of this employment or that you will be able to do something about it when it does happen.

Certainly the cold war is cold; that is, it is not a shooting war, by and large, for just this reason. It's a lot safer for both sides to do it with jujitsu if they can. But you can't be sure that the other guy is not going to think that, if he slips a knife under his cummerbund, he can win the jujitsu match by getting you when your back is turned.

QUESTION: Mr. King, I think you have explained away remarkably the lack of the Soviet threat in Europe. I would like to change the locale, and perhaps go out to the Far East. I personally do not feel that Red China is going to undertake any military operation there in the near future; I mean in the next three, four, or five years. However, assuming hostilities by Red China in the near future, I can see such a preponderance of Red Chinese forces on the ground--2-1/2 million men; in the air 2,500 aircraft--that they can outperform anything that we have in the area or can bring to bear out there. Their navy is inconsequential, but right there they could also bring in their friends, the Russians, on a sort of a clandestine basis. I do not see any possibility of our using the forces we have now, or the forces we can bring to bear, to achieve our objective in that area, which, I assume, is to protect Formosa, at least for the time being, without using fractional nuclear weapons. I think we cannot under any circumstances get by with conventional weapons as we could in the situation that held during the evacuation in 1955 when the Chinese forces were not so strong. So I think we would have to depend on nuclear weapons.

MR. KING: That is a good question. I think there are two answers to it. What would you do with fractional atomic weapons if they had them, too?

STUDENT: They don't have them, sir.

MR. KING: Well then, you also said you don't expect them to attack any time soon.

STUDENT: Well, I feel that they have the preponderance of conventional stuff and that they can attack in time. I feel, however, that they will use judo at the present time.

MR. KING: Do you think they are fools? It is perfectly obvious that they can't expect to use their massive manpower successfully in an attack on Formosa against our atomic weapons. We have made it a matter of record, including a congressional vote, that we will use atomic weapons--that was the implication--if they attack with their massive manpower.

I think a much better bet is that they are waiting until the Russian stockpile is big enough so that they can be let in on it. And, if they do come in the next five or ten years, they will come after a shower of propaganda. Life magazine might very well run a picture of Communist Chinese Honest Johns, with mushroom clouds out in front of them. They can wait. They are not going to walk into a buzz saw. This is the first question.

The second point is a very uncomfortable one; but I think it still has to be made. I said earlier that there may be cases where the enemy's aggressive "worth of winning" far exceeds ours. President Eisenhower left no doubt whatever about that in the case of Hungary. We should have liked very much to liberate the Hungarians, not only for humanitarian reasons, but for reasons of national security. But it would have cut the heart out of the Russian position in Western Europe. We couldn't. There is such a thing as the economy of force. There has always been. There have always been national objectives that we wanted but could not attain.

In the nuclear age, once we go through the necessary revolution in our thinking, it may turn out that there are some areas where we can expand, but there also may be some areas where we have to pull in our necks. I don't mean by this that I should wipe the Far East off our strategic map, just give it up as hopeless, even though the circumstances will obviously be quite different when the Chinese Communists are in a position to attack with nuclear weapons. A lot of the targets that they might be interested in attacking would be places where they would not be using mass forces anyway. For example, if they collected 1,000 junks to attack Formosa, they would just present us with a beautiful target for atomic attack. They will probably also be using smaller mobile forces. We will have the same old situation. They are going to have to guess what their chances are; we are going to have to guess what our chances are. They will have to make as big a roar as they can; we shall have to make as big a roar as we can. Maybe we'll face them down.

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Maybe they'll try it. If they do try it, we may lose or we may win. There are two points that I try to emphasize. One is: Don't give the fight up, before it comes, on the grounds that you can't win it because the peril is just too great; unless it is as obvious a situation as Hungary was, the way the President considered it. That's the first point--don't give it up.

The second point is: Don't go into it in the spirit that you've got to win it, regardless of the consequences, because the consequences in this age may easily be much too high a price to pay.

I don't think that people scare themselves needlessly dreaming up horrible pictures of what nuclear bombs will do to the world. I think it is just ordinary realism. You've got to be aware of this thing. Once you are aware of it, you can begin to feel your way through the problem it creates.

I would not at all say that Formosa can't be defended. How would you like to launch an amphibious force across an open sea in an atomic war? This is one of the things that the tactical nuclear strategists haven't been able to solve at all. We might knock ourselves out building landing craft that could go under the sea, or something that would walk on the water, or helicopters big enough to fly whole armies, in order to get across. And we might do it. But could the Chinese do it? We probably couldn't defend Hong Kong.

STUDENT: My point, sir, is that we can't do it without atomic weapons in the foreseeable future.

MR. KING: And my point is that once they have atomic weapons too we can't be sure we can do it with atomic weapons.

STUDENT: They have no other capability. But anyway they can do it. But we can't stop it short of nuclear weapons.

MR. KING: I think that's probably right at the moment. All I am saying is, don't let us commit ourselves in advance, at the time when they can make the attack with nuclear weapons, to being able to defend only with nuclear weapons. If they come forth with the offer to fight the thing out like David and Goliath, we'll say, "O. K., boys, we'll fight it that way, because that's a much safer way to do it;" and it's a way by which we may very well be able to get a cleaner decision. They could miss getting Formosa, but they wouldn't lose Peiping. So you could

have a peace. If they miss Formosa and lose Peiping and Shanghai and a lot of other Chinese cities, it's very doubtful that you will ever get a peace in that area unless we just wipe out the Chinese and take over. But don't forget that the Chinese and the Russians have a mutual-defense treaty. I don't imagine the Russians would let the Chinese go down the drain to suit our convenience.

QUESTION: Sir, I am wondering if there will be any limitation in your context on atomic weapons as to purpose or geographical area. For example, if we should use atomic anti-aircraft missiles in the United States, I don't see that it necessarily follows that the Russians will engage in atomic or nuclear bombing against us. This would be almost conventional. But, in particular, could we let it be known that, if the Chinese would attack south of the 38th parallel, we would use nuclear weapons in defense? If they landed more than 10 miles north of the parallel, or some similar distance, we would not use nuclear weapons against them. If they went beyond that, we would defend ourselves by this means. Is this a practical limitation?

MR. KING: As long as we have a decisive advantage in nuclear weapons, I have no doubt that it is practical. The problem I am studying is: What happens when we no longer have that advantage? We can say, "We won't use these weapons unless you attack. If you do attack, we are going to use them, in this stated way. We won't use them outside of Korea, if you like; we'll drop them only on the Koreans." Well, they are going to say something, too, at least in their minds. They will say, "O. K., we'll either attack or we won't. If we think we can win, we'll attack. We'll go into Korea too, and wipe out South Korea."

This is the problem of limiting atomic war. I don't deny it can be done. I think the circumstances probably would have to be very special. If so it may be worth the risk. It is possible that it might be. I have great respect for Henry Kissinger and some of my English friends who have made this argument, the argument that you have to be able to use atomic weapons if you can't defeat aggression with conventional weapons; and of course if you use thermonuclear weapons it doesn't make any sense at all; you've got to use little weapons. They are working very hard at this. I think they've got a pretty good case in some respects. But it does increase the risk, because it is difficult to limit these things.

How do you draw a distinction between a 750-KT bomb and a 1-megaton bomb? What difference does it make to the people it lands on?

As for your question about nuclear warheads in our AA weapons. That's no problem at all, so long as you confine it to defense of this continent, because if they attack us seriously it will be with megaton weapons. In the defense of Western Europe in limited war it would be a problem.

QUESTION: Sir, did I read too much in your answer to the question before that? I understand that you concur that the Chinese could cross the 150 miles and land on Formosa in spite of our Navy using conventional weapons?

MR. KING: Wait a minute, now. Are you talking about the conventional crossing or the atomic crossing?

STUDENT: I thought you had concurred with Bob that the Chinese could successfully cross and take Formosa if we use conventional weapons. I am wondering, couldn't our Navy withstand the invasion?

MR. KING: I don't think they have a ghost of a chance of crossing it now, even if we confine ourselves to conventional weapons. I think probably what he had in mind is that there is more of a problem in the areas where they have land access--say Thailand. There, at least theoretically, it is possible. They could march in. Actually it is not so good. These areas have been boundaries for a long time, and they are pretty rough, and the logistic support of a large mass of men, even men living on Chinese rations, would hardly be feasible.

Still defense against conventional attack there is a more serious problem. On the other hand, there is also a problem of what you do with nuclear weapons to defend against such an attack. I am sure that most of you have heard the various versions of the Dien Bien Phu affair. Somebody proposed that we use atomic weapons to rescue the French. I understand the question was asked--well, how do you use them? The French said they were sure they were being attacked by three divisions, but they hadn't been able to find them. They couldn't tell us where they were. How were we going to drop atom bombs on them?

What do you do? Carpet bomb the whole of North Vietnam? Or would you carpet bomb the whole of South China? It wouldn't be difficult, once your stockpile is up to five or more figures. You can do it all right, and the bigger bombs you use, the more efficient it is. This is another reason why the idea of the little bombs is not too convincing.

QUESTION: Sir, would you elaborate a little bit more on the other end of the spectrum, the limited war, the guerrilla warfare, and the problems attendant, and how you would employ foreign nationals, and any other areas in that particular field?

MR. KING: As I said, I meant to emphasize that I think guerrilla warfare is primarily a political problem. We have been preoccupied heretofore with those cases in which the enemy is stirring up guerrillas against us. This has largely come out of the fact that we were allied with colonial powers and they had divisions in these areas that were under attack. It is not exclusively a cold-war problem. It is also a problem of world revolution, of Asian and African people against Western Europe. In these cases, we were sometimes on the spot.

The problem, it seems to me, is first of all a political-economic problem. Of course you may have to fight the guerrillas, too, but these things have to go along hand in hand. You have to take care of the basic political-economic situation while you hold the guerrillas down. What I am thinking about, though, is, if we go on the offensive, there could very well be cases where, by boring from within, and turning the tables, we could put the enemy in a position where he has to put out 20 men for every guerrilla there is in circulation. Particularly in Western Europe, this is a prospect we should be thinking about very seriously, if we get into a scrap of any kind, even a little war between, say, Rumania and Yugoslavia. We can be pretty sure that a good majority of the population of all the satellites hate the Communists like the very devil. If we can reduce the efficiency of Communist forces to the point where they can't suppress these people effectively, we have a beautiful opportunity for a guerrilla operation. If we are really successful, it wouldn't remain a guerrilla operation, and then we could begin to organize forces and make a more positive showing. That was all I wanted to say.

Let's don't think of guerrillas as unpleasant people who go around committing immoral acts, mainly against us. Let's see guerrilla action as a symptom of malaise in the body politics that can very well be made an asset, rather than always a liability.

CAPTAIN SAUNDERS: Mr. King, it is quite apparent that you are not only well informed in this area but that you enjoy discussion in this area. We certainly want to thank you for the forthright way in which you have answered these questions and the broad way in which you have attacked the problem. Thank you very much for coming.

(31 May 1957--3, 950)O/ebm