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DEFENCE IN THE NUCLEAR AGE

by

**COMMANDER
SIR STEPHEN
KING-HALL**

in which, against a background
of service experience & tradition,
he argues for

**UNILATERAL
NUCLEAR
DISARMAMENT**

Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall has been through two world wars; he is a graduate of two staff colleges, a holder of the rarely awarded Gold Medal of the Royal United Service Institution, and (during his service career) the occupant of many important staff appointments. He is also a politician, with a passionate interest in foreign affairs. It is from this dual interest, the military and the political, that the present book has been born.

Sir Stephen starts by analyzing the *nature* of war and pointing out that, if we misunderstand its nature, we inevitably misunderstand its object; and that, if we misunderstand its object, our methods must be correspondingly false. Most, if not all, writers on defence questions—Clausewitz in his day was a notable exception—assume that we all know what war is, and therefore what we are trying to do if war breaks out as well as what it is we are trying to prevent from “breaking out”. Sir Stephen, on the other hand, suggests that most of us, including our rulers, have *not* known what war is about; and that even when there has been some understanding of the basic fact—that war essentially exists before the shooting starts—this understanding is immediately obliterated by the terrible drama of military operations.

In the first part of his book the author, after exposing what he considers existing fallacies about the nature of war and its object, vigorously attacks our present defence system based on the great deterrent. But, he continues, it is not good enough to be destructively critical. Is there another and perhaps better idea on which to base our defences, an idea that can be logically linked to the true nature of war? Yes, says Sir Stephen, there is indeed such an idea, but in order to grasp it the reader must make an effort to break through the thought-barrier in defence thinking.

Physical violence, continues Sir Stephen, has outlived its usefulness as the main tactical force in defence strategy, and must now be replaced in priority by moral and political forces. Sir Stephen proposes that Great Britain, either

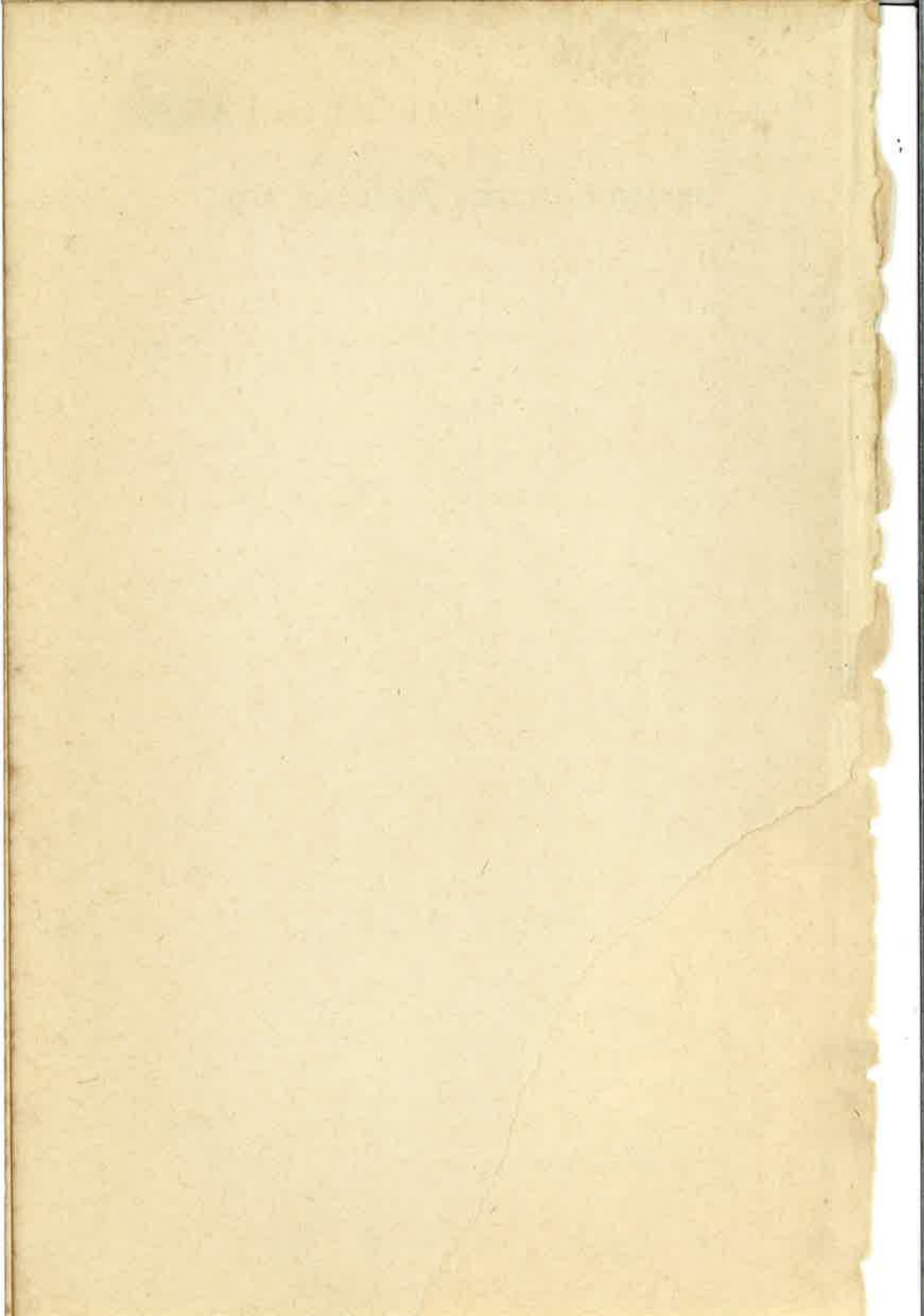
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unilaterally or in agreement with like-minded Powers, should abandon the use of nuclear energy for military purposes. He then works out in detail what this would or might mean vis-à-vis our American allies and the Soviet Union. He evades no issues, including the question of an occupation by the enemy of the U.K., and he analyzes, in the light of recent occupations as well as in terms of his own imagination, what this would mean and how it should be resisted. He points out incidentally that, even excluding nuclear weapons, the U.K. has never been so vulnerable to occupation as it is today, and brands as defeatist those who consider that, should an enemy ever occupy the U.K., all is irrevocably lost.

Sir Stephen then examines the problem of training the nation in the new technique of defence, in which morality and expediency would find themselves on the same platform: and gives the basis of a blue-print for a nationwide plan from Whitehall to the village, and for the role of the B.B.C., T.U.C., the Press and other national institutions. Sir Stephen holds firmly that the best method of defence is attack, and has something to say about the inadequate nature of our political warfare arrangements, and about how they should be enlarged and made more effective in the new defence strategy.

Finally, Sir Stephen makes a moving plea to the British people: let it be *they* who have the courage and political sagacity to rise to the unique opportunity now offered them, and, by breaking the present fatal deadlock, set an example to the world—an example that might save mankind and themselves from the horrors of nuclear war.

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AGE**

by

STEPHEN KING-HALL

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"The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night: in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the words that are therein shall be burned up."

2 Peter iii. 10

"Many a victory has been and will be suicidal to the victors."

Plato

"Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding."

Einstein

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FOREWORD

THE BOOK YOU are about to read is a discussion about national defence in the nuclear age. The issues confronting every human being in this matter are both simple and perplexing. Simple, because they are easy to understand; perplexing because all possible solutions are fraught with great known and unknown risks. What's to be done?

After examining the whole question in an objective manner I have reached the conclusion that the balance of advantage lies in the declaration (unilaterally if necessary) by the British Government that the United Kingdom will abandon the use of nuclear energy for military purposes. Such a decision, as explained in the book, would lead to momentous consequences, some good, some full of risk. It would profoundly affect the size of our conventional forces and our relations with the U.S.A.; on the other hand it would release powerful forces and resources for the political warfare aspect of defence.

I suspect from discussion whilst this book was being written that many experts in defence will declare that, whereas they concede the validity of a great deal of what is to be found in Parts I and II of the book, Part III is more than they can stomach and they will conclude that I have "gone pacifist". In short, that a strategy of defence and *attack* against Soviet directed communism which is not based on violence is necessarily "Pacifist", a word which to many people conveys an attitude of Christian resignation and of turning the other cheek. Admirable as this attitude may be, it is not the policy particularly recommended in this book. The object of the strategy outlined in this volume is not only to defend our way of life but to destroy Communism. I reject as being anything more than an uneasy armistice all wishful thinking that there can be "peaceful co-existence" in the one-world of today between Communism and the democratic way of life.

Mr George Kennan in his B.B.C. Reith lectures drew attention to the importance of a correct appreciation of the nature of a Soviet strategy in which armed force plays a secondary part,

but because Mr Khrushchev appears to understand the limitations of violence we should not consider him to be a "Pacifist". What we must do is to beat the Communists in the strategy and tactics of Total War in the nuclear age. In order to do this we must secure the political and economic initiative and this is not best done by competing in a nuclear arms race. This highly perilous policy suffers from the fatal defect that since we shall never inaugurate a nuclear preventive war it is at the best a purely defensive strategy lacking that element of attack which is the best method of defence.

Our policy must do more than deter the Communist leaders; it must defeat them in the world wide struggle for the allegiance of men's minds, and do so without the peril of the sudden destruction of all we wish to defend.

I call upon those who after reading this book are still unable to make that complete break through the thought-barrier needed in a situation in which, as I write these words, a Russian satellite is circling the globe, to give their support to an authoritative enquiry into the whole question raised in these pages. Nothing less will do, though much more than that should be done.

STEPHEN KING-HALL, 1957

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I acknowledge with gratitude the assistance I have received from Miss Ann King-Hall in the preparation of this book.

INTRODUCTION

IN KING-HALL NEWS-LETTER Number 475 of 16th August, 1945, published after the first atomic bombs had fallen on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I wrote:

"We are now living in the age of controlled atomic energy . . . the most revolutionary event which has yet occurred in the history of man . . . the news of the collapse of Japan . . . is of very little significance as measured by the standards of what the Atomic Bomb is going to mean to mankind.

"I say the Atomic Bomb and do not refer to the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes because . . . at least ten years are likely to elapse before atomic energy can be used for non-war-like purposes . . . those two bombs . . . may have been and I think will prove to have been the last explosions of consequence in the history of large scale war. Total war—large scale national war—is at an end. It has vanished from the sphere of practical politics . . . physical violence as a continuation of political purposes will be limited to riots and large scale police action. . . . Total War has reached its ultimate and absolute physical development, it has made political and economic nationalism a meaningless thing and so Total War has abolished itself . . . (but) it does not seem as if the obvious fact that Total War has become meaningless is yet fully understood. . . . Three great powers, the U.S.A., Great Britain and Russia will soon be able to make atomic bombs; they will be joined by France, Sweden and others. The manufacture of the bombs will become easier. What then? It is impossible to imagine that the nations or the masses will tolerate a situation in which at the slightest ruffle on the waters of international politics people will say: 'Suppose they send over a hundred atomic bombers tonight?' No national state will ever dare issue an ultimatum to another with a time limit of even six hours, because the reply in five hours might be a shower of A.B.'s. It is obviously a situation which cannot remain in a state of suspended animation. Something will have to be done about it. . . . The Atomic Bomb enables its user to strike with devastating

and comprehensive effect at the whole of the enemy's civil population. Whoever uses it *first* does not necessarily *win the war* because the atomic bombers of nation A may be on their way to bomb nation B whilst their own homeland is being turned into a crematorium. Both sides may more or less simultaneously knock each other out of the ring. . . ."

Twelve years later I saw no reason to modify the conclusions reached in 1945 but it was alarmingly clear that my conviction that "something will have to be done about it" had been over-optimistic. Nothing had been done about it and mankind appeared to be in a kind of schismatic condition as it watched in paralysed alarm the progress of its scientists in the task of projecting packaged explosions of enormous and literally unimaginable violence via the stratosphere from one part of the globe to another.

It was twelve years after News-Letter 475 that I published News-Letter 1083 and its sequel 1087. The heading was "Reflections on Defence". The conclusion of the arguments outlined in these news-letters was that our defence policy, as set forth in the Government's White Paper on Defence 1957, was based on the existence of a weapon—the H-bomb—which had two serious defects. First, that although in 1957 the best scientific opinion did not agree as to the amount of harm which was being done to the future of humanity from the fall-out consequent upon test explosions, all the experts agreed that if the tests were continued indefinitely some harm and perhaps serious evils were certain.¹ It is right to add that in 1957 there was talk of successful experiments designed to produce a clean bomb. This was not really "good news".

The second and, to my way of thinking, most serious defect of the H-bomb is that experimental data provide proof that this weapon, with whose existence our defence policy is linked, would, if ever used, lead to the certain destruction of everything we desire to defend.

For these and other reasons it was clear to me that our defence policy, based as it was on the traditional foundation of using force for defence against force, was open to serious criticism.

¹ See various reports including that of Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy on radio-active fall-out and its effects on man.

I therefore suggested that it was desirable to consider whether it was possible for our defence policy to be based on a different foundation and whether there was any other form of defence against aggression which could be adopted.

If the use of force involved the acceptance of so many objectionable conditions, uncertainties and possibilities, what about the practice of non-violence as a basis for our defence policy?

Merely to ask such a question causes bewilderment in many minds. The whole idea is novel and almost absurd to any person who has never thought of defence except in terms of violence. But the H-bomb is also novel and horribly, obscenely, absurd. During the past century many ideas which intelligent men in 1860 would have regarded as fantastic have become accepted as part of our daily lives. It is unlikely that the man of 1860 would have either believed or understood a prophet who told him: "Your grandson will fly at 500 miles an hour, see pictures and hear voices from afar as easily as you hear or see me as I talk to you in this room; he will invent a bomb of which six would destroy London, and he will send a satellite round the world."

It is unreasonable to suppose that the whole subject of defence and the traditional ideas associated with it cannot be subject to revolutionary changes. It would be a very exceptional form of human activity if it escaped the revolution which has transformed civilization in the past few decades.

Defence has been revolutionized materially but remained mentally stagnant. Some aspects of defence had undergone remarkable changes before the arrival of the nuclear weapon and all the nuclear weapon has done is to enormously accelerate tendencies already becoming noticeable in the pre-nuclear age. We must break through the thought-barrier in defence thinking and see what we find on the other side, a thought-barrier represented by the centuries old idea of most people that violence is the only practical means of defence against violence.

"Most people" did not and does not include the Pacifists who up till now have had a monopoly of the idea that violence may not be the only way of countering violence. The Pacifist is not interested in countering violence, he is concerned with his conviction that violence as such is morally wrong. The

conscientiously held views of the Pacifist—and I am bound to say I think they have the teachings of Jesus on their side—command my deep respect and admiration but it would be untrue to report that I have been able to share and translate into action moral pacifist ideas during the two world wars in which I have taken part.

I am not a Pacifist in the accepted sense of that word and do not feel any sense of guilt or shame on looking across my study and contemplating a case of medals acquired by four generations of my family, from 1812 onwards, in consideration of our efforts to slaughter the enemies of Britain in time of war. But I see no reason why opinions held by Pacifists for moral causes are therefore necessarily to be ignored by non-Pacifists if such opinions are useful for defence purposes.

I therefore suggested in News-Letter 1083 of 24th April, 1957 that we should take a new look at our defence arrangements and that, as part of this process, there should be a Royal Commission, or perhaps a committee sponsored by the Imperial Defence College, charged with the task of looking into the advantages and disadvantages of non-violent resistance as the basis of our national defence policy.

If such an enquiry showed that such a basis was better than our present one, whose unsatisfactory character I have outlined, then morality and expediency would find themselves on the same platform and I saw no harm in that possible result.

II

On September 10th, 1947 the *Manchester Guardian* published a letter from me which included the following remarks:

“The reports now reaching this country of the physical destruction caused by the release of the atomic bomb confirm to the fullest extent the estimate of those who declared that this event signalled a turning-point in human affairs.

“If national sovereignty is not subordinated to some effective form of international control an unprecedented disaster in human history is sure to take place. . . .

“. . . When the bomb fell the most unimaginative people were momentarily stirred into awareness of the need for quick

and drastic action. Nothing happened; apathy resumed its sway. I therefore propose:

- “(a) That the Government suggest that a joint Parliamentary Congressional Select Committee be appointed forthwith to report to Parliament and Congress upon the consequences and implications of the bomb.
- “(b) That the Government propose that when this report is completed the members of the British Houses of Parliament—or a full committee thereof composed of not less than 400 M.P.s and 100 Peers—proceed to Washington together with the Speaker and Lord Chancellor for a five-day joint Congressional-Parliamentary debate on the recommendations of the report.

“If this plan were to be adopted the ordinary man in the street would say: ‘At last something has happened in the political world which measures up to the scope of the bomb.’

“All this may be unusual, but so is an atomic bomb.”

These suggestions were ignored and “the plumed horrors” of radio-active clouds began to become commonplace, first in the Pacific areas and then in Siberia. The tactical nuclear weapon was developed and bedevilled the situation.

However, when I returned to the subject in 1957 I was astonished by the widespread response to a proposal (for an enquiry) put forward in a small circulation news-letter.

Naturally, the Pacifist publications in Britain and overseas welcomed my suggestion which, they were careful to point out, came from a person with “a military background”. I had the impression that I was regarded as a butcher turned vegetarian! But I must acknowledge my debt to *Peace News* and other Pacifist papers because they at once canvassed non-Pacifists and thus revealed a wide measure of support for the idea of an enquiry from people who, though not Pacifists in the moral sense, were profoundly disturbed by present developments. Some forty M.P.s of left-wing politics invited me to meet them, and the *Manchester Guardian*, *Catholic Herald*, *New Statesman*

and Nation as well as various papers in India, Australia and Germany made sympathetic references to my proposals for an enquiry.

The *Manchester Guardian* commented editorially that: "If any of the possible developments of modern weapons were to emerge, the alternative of non-violent resistance might be as Sir Stephen suggests, the best means to defend our way of life."

The Bishop of Manchester raised the matter in the Lords and other churchmen backed the idea. It was a policy, wrote the Editor of the *Catholic Herald*, which he had no doubt "would receive the blessing of the Holy See and the great religious leaders of the world".

I also discovered in the course of "off the record" talks that the proposal was being taken seriously by several eminent serving officers. This did not surprise me since top-level service people are often much more flexibly minded about defence questions than are their political masters, who correctly reflect the ignorance and traditionally conservative attitude of mind towards defence problems of most of the electorate.

Although public support for my suggestion that an enquiry would be worth-while came in the first instance chiefly from the political left, I received a number of letters from a more generally representative section of the population and a study of the correspondence suggested that there are thousands of people who are profoundly disturbed and worried about the present state of affairs and eagerly looking for a solution to our defence problems which *might* provide us with an escape from perplexing and alarming dilemmas.

Although it was easy enough to outline my general idea, I was conscious that my own mind was by no means clear about the nature of the many novel problems which would be created if the U.K. decided to adopt the alternative basis for its defence policy.

To take refuge in the statement that it was precisely in order to ascertain what these problems would be that I was asking for an enquiry was evasive action and not very courageous. I decided it was my duty to make an attempt to enlarge and elaborate the outline of the idea published in the news-letter in order to stimulate discussion and try to find out whether there was a *prima facie* case for a large-scale enquiry. This book

is a personal contribution to the debate and claims to be no more than that.

The reader may be surprised to notice that it begins with a chapter on the nature of war.

This is relevant to the theme of the book for the following reasons:

Since about 1930 I have experienced growing doubts as to whether our defence arrangements were based on a sound understanding of the nature of war and (without anticipating here the contents of Chapter I) my conclusion, strongly reinforced by events from 1936-57, is that in the strategy of Total War there has been a deplorable neglect of the importance of political warfare and much over-emphasis on the significance of military operations. This will be an old story to those who have read my news-letter for the past twenty years and recall—for example—a private attempt to conduct political warfare against the Nazis in 1939 which, relative to the small scale of its operations, was extremely successful.

The development of nuclear weapons on the side of military force has only added extreme urgency to the need to solve a defence problem which was becoming increasingly tiresome at the end of the pre-nuclear age. Even with so-called conventional weapons the destructive capacity of military operations seemed to be approaching a state of affairs in which military victory was only obtainable at a price (in which had to be included the economic cost of preparation for defence) so great that it was becoming unreasonable.

The nuclear weapon may be the last straw which will break the camel's back and therefore its significance is that it seems to oblige us to look into the whole question of the anatomy of the already overloaded military camel and see whether he has served his purpose and should be replaced by some other animal.

That is why we must start with a probe into the nature of war which is that form of relationship between sovereign states which has caused us to load up the camel with his expensive, heavy, conventional burden and now demands that he shall also support a radio-active nuclear surcharge!

INTRODUCTION TO THIRD EDITION

WHILST THIS BOOK was being printed important developments took place. The publication of the 1958 White Paper on Defence provided startling evidence of the inherent and desperately dangerous contradictions in our present defence arrangements. Briefly, the significance of Command Paper 363 is this: It states plainly that if the Soviet Union carried out "a major attack" (para. 12) or a "military adventure" (para. 13) "*even with conventional forces only*" we should retaliate with an H-bomb attack! This statement is a grim addition to the footnote on page 136 of this book. Secondly, the White Paper actually asserts that the success of the policy of the deterrent will "compel" the Soviet Union to seek other measures to achieve world domination including "*indirect military action*". An example of what this might be is to be found on page 103. Although the White Paper says that the Russians must not be allowed to think the West "would flinch from using its nuclear power" (para. 13) it is clear from the document that it is impossible (as stated in this book, on page 100) to define precisely in advance in what circumstances an all-out H-bomb attack on Russia would be launched. Thirdly, the White Paper confesses (para. 15) that "some unforeseen circumstance or miscalculation might spark off a world wide catastrophe" and that "since there are risks in leaving things as they are it is justifiable, within reasonable limits, to accept risks in trying to bring about an agreement". To say that there are risks in "leaving things as they are" is a very British under-statement.

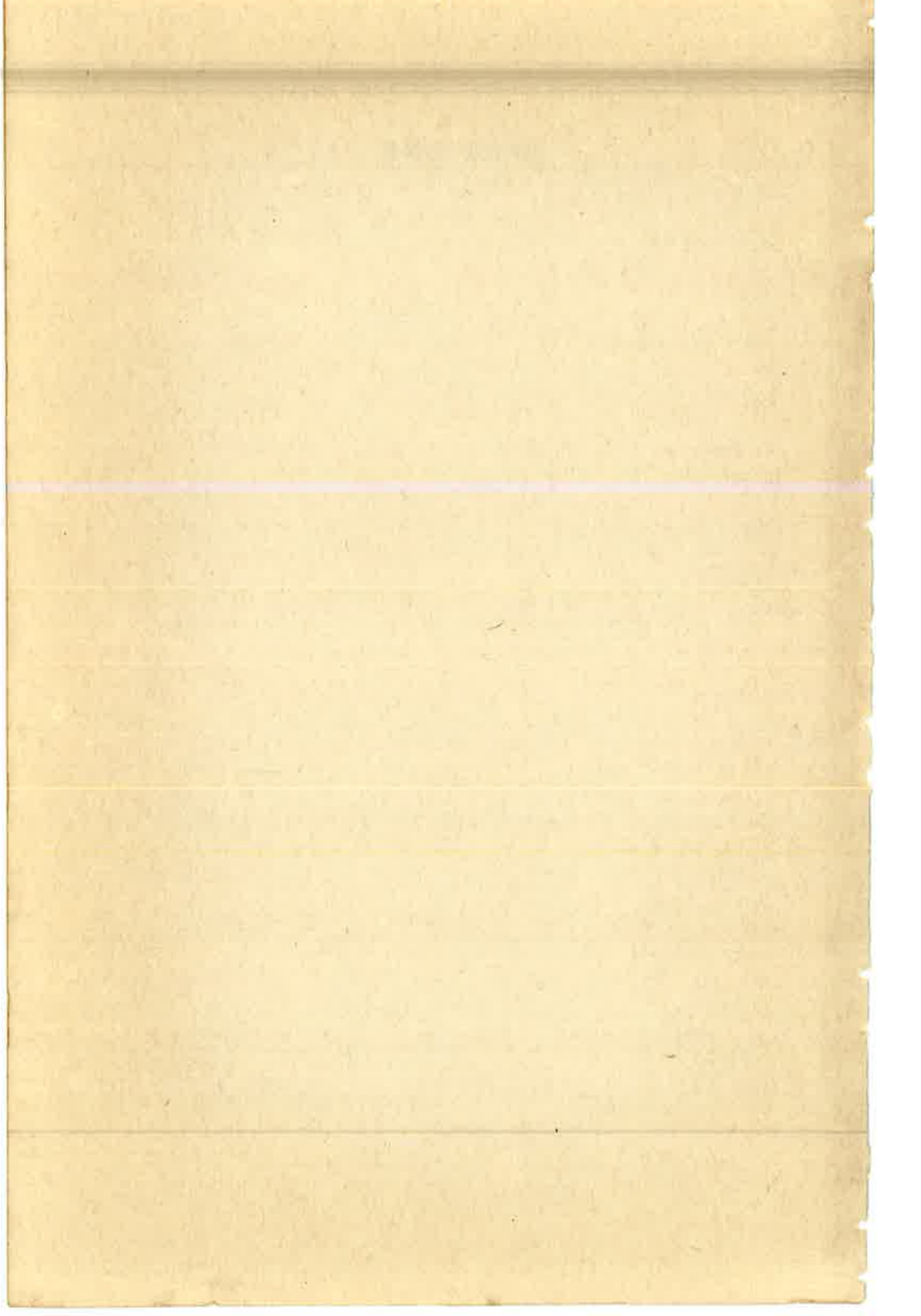
Other post-publication developments are first the decision to establish intermediate range rocket bases in Britain, even though these particular weapons will be obsolete before they rear their ugly and conspicuous noses above the countryside; second, the race between each side to produce atomic-powered submarines capable of discharging H-bomb missiles from under water.

Finally, I am now convinced that the situation is so dangerous and critical that there is not time in which to set up the enquiry which I advocate in the book. Indeed the enquiry is now taking place in the forum of public opinion. We must act with speed and renounce the use of nuclear energy for military purposes.

March, 1958

STEPHEN KING-HALL

PART ONE



CHAPTER ONE

THE NATURE OF WAR

WAR IS A WORD used to describe a relationship between sovereign states. To most people the word WAR means some form of military activity. If armed forces are operating, the nation is "at war"; if they are not, "we are at peace". Of course "most people" are fully entitled to attach to any word whatever meaning they choose but they should know (which they do not) that in co-relating war with military operations they are giving to this word a much narrower meaning than its origins entitle it to claim.

Further reflection may lead "most people" to suspect that they have been deceiving themselves in saying that war means simply military operations and that if no bangs are taking place we are at peace; for in order to discuss the various kinds of non-peaceful relations between sovereign states they have had to invent qualifying phrases such as *total war*; *political war*; *cold war*; *economic war*; *nuclear war* and—for example—the phrase "the cold war" has come into existence because it was only too evident, especially in the example of the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West during the period after World War II, that although the Soviet Union and the U.K. were bound together by a treaty of twenty years' duration, there was no peace between them even though their military forces were not fighting each other.

Indeed so unpeaceful were relations, that the rulers of the Soviet Union (who had taken to heart the teachings of the genius Lenin who thoroughly understood the true nature of war) were often on record as stating in the clearest possible manner that they were actively engaged in the task of spreading Communism and therefore destroying the free way of life.¹

¹ As recently as 2nd June, 1957, Mr. Khrushchev said: "With regard to the ideology of capitalist and socialist countries, we have never concealed that there will be a struggle in this field, an ideological struggle. . . . I once said that if an atomic war came it would be capitalism that would perish in that war. This I repeat today. But we think that capitalism should be destroyed . . . through an ideological and economic struggle."

Because there has been, and still is, a great deal of misunderstanding about the *nature* of war, this has led to error about the *object* of war.

During the first half of this century war has become Total. In its military manifestations it has become an activity absorbing the whole of the resources of the nation and a faulty appreciation of the purpose of such a formidable and all-embracing national effort is a very serious matter. A nation can stand a reasonable number of national mistakes such as the Ground Nuts Scheme in East Africa, but to make a mistake about the object of a major war may be catastrophic.

The word War is derived from an old English word *WERRE* and an old Northern French word of the same spelling from which is derived the modern *guerre*. The word *WERRE* came from the old High German *WERRA* which meant confusion, discord or strife and was derived—so it is assumed—from the Teutonic roots *werz* and *wers*, whence we also get the modern word “worse”.

I have been told that it is unlikely that the tribes who used the word *werre* some 1,500 years ago had a word specifically intended to mean what we should now call military operations and nothing else. In their relatively primitive societies, in which the largest unit was the tribe, a state of discord or strife between tribes would normally be equated with violent action and diplomatic contacts would be unusual. War in those days must have been total and a Saxon raid on England would not always be preceded by an ultimatum! Then came a period during which a practice grew up for states to have professional armed forces trained and maintained exclusively for the use of violence in the form of military operations.

This development reached its climax at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then came the conscript armies and with the twentieth century we swing rapidly back to the conception of the nation in arms, or Total War.

It is important to recognize that the root idea expressed by *werre* was the general notion of strife.

Since men's actions and ideas are related as is the thunder to the lightning, every action is the child of an idea.¹ Therefore

¹ Children and ill-informed adults are more frightened of the thunder than of the lightning. It is the lightning (the idea) which is significant.

strife or discord *must* be the product of a mental process, of a difference in ideas or opinion, whether the strife exists between two persons, two groups within a nation, two nations or two groups of nations.

Therefore the fundamental meaning of WAR is that it is the expression of a difference of opinion. The object of war must therefore be defined as follows: THE OBJECT OF WAR IS TO CHANGE THE ENEMY'S MIND. This simple and almost platitudinous statement is of supreme importance and a failure to remember it and to use it as a guide to national strategy has led to the most deplorable results.

Confining our attention solely to events since 1914 the key statement mentioned above has never been given its true and fundamental importance. Professionals have often described the object of war as being that of: "*Imposing* our will upon the enemy." This is too narrow a definition. Imposition is only one way—and not necessarily the best way of bringing the enemy's thinking into harmony with ours.

II

I will consider how this statement about the object of war stands up to the test of what happened in the two world wars. At the beginning of each world war the issue between the British and German governments was reasonably clear and it was a difference of opinion of an ideological character.

The outbreak of military operations had been preceded by a state of tension between the two states and—as we shall see in the next chapter—this tension was less clearly moral or ideological before World War I than before World War II.

In 1912 as in 1937 there was a state of *verre* or conflict between the U.K. and Germany and it was reflected in an armaments race. Both sides were convinced that if the tension continued and became more acute the situation might develop into a trial of physical strength. In the years before World War I the British nation was divided in its opinion as to whether the Germany of the Kaiser William II was making reasonable claims for a place in the sun (the have-nots asking the haves for something) or whether Germany was a ruthless militaristic nation prepared to act without any regard for the

rights of others or accepted principles of international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

It was *the act* of the German invasion of Belgium which rallied the mass of the British people behind their Government and convinced them that Germany had thus revealed the truly immoral nature of her policy.

In the years immediately preceding World War II, the ruthless policies and brutalities of the Nazi régime, to which Mussolini's Fascism had provided a pale introduction, had already created a state of acute ideological conflict between Great Britain (and other democratic powers) and the German Reich. Although the phrase had not yet been forced into existence, there was a state of tension we should now call a cold war. Vaguely in many men's minds in Britain, but conspicuously *not* in the minds of the Cabinet if their actions and speeches correctly reflected their thoughts, the idea began to grow that in Nazism we were confronted with evil ideas.

In 1939 Hitler's assault on Poland, which followed so close on the heels of his rape of Czechoslovakia, was an act that once again roused the British people to action in defence of law and against the unrestricted exercise of national sovereignty. In each case there were all kinds of subsidiary reasons which caused the men in charge of Britain's affairs to decide that violence must be used to curb violence. But, unless it be argued that it is less creditable to do the right thing—or what people believe to be the right thing—because to do so is also advantageous, I believe it to be true that in 1914 and in 1939 considerations of expediency were secondary in importance in the minds of the electorate when the man in the pub and the woman at the sink made up their minds "that this sort of thing will not do; we must act".

As I have remarked above, each world war was launched from a predominantly moral slipway and reflected a discord, strife or dispute about ideas, about conceptions of what was *right* and what was *wrong*. The British Prime Minister in his Guildhall speech on the 9th November, 1914 outlined our war aims: "We shall never sheathe the sword which we have not lightly drawn . . . until the rights of the smaller nationalities of Europe are placed upon an unassailable foundation and until the military domination of Prussia is wholly and finally destroyed."

Later on Mr. Lloyd George described the purpose of the War as being "the war to end wars". And the German Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg—unlike Hitler—felt it to be necessary, partly no doubt to satisfy German opinion, to excuse the invasion of Belgium by the plea of "military necessity."

In his broadcast on 3rd September, 1939 the British Prime Minister said: "It is the evil things that we shall be fighting against—brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution—and against them I am certain that the right will prevail." He also said: "In this war we are not fighting against you, the German people, for whom we have no bitter feelings, but against a tyranny and foresworn régime, which has betrayed not only you, its own people, but the whole of western civilization and all that you and we hold dear." Both Asquith's speech in 1914 and Chamberlain's broadcast in 1939 accurately expressed the national reason for the war. If this was not so then the two Prime Ministers were expressing humbug on a national scale.

The author of this book was invited by the B.B.C. to give the first general broadcast talk after the outbreak of war when normal programmes were resumed. Asked for my opinion as to the subject I said: "There can only be one subject and it must be 'Why we are at war'." This being agreed (and time was in short supply) I retired to a room in Broadcasting House and drafted the talk. Some key sentences were:

"The fundamental reason why we are at war, why we are going to win this war, why in the widest sense we cannot lose the war, is because we are defending certain things which are far more lasting than frontier boundaries, individual lives or economic considerations . . . we are at war because France, Great Britain and the Dominions . . . stand in the world for an interpretation of life which is sometimes called democratic. . . . We are at war to defend moral values . . . it is a crusade upon which we are engaged and we must be for ever on guard lest in the heat of battle and passion of war, we lose sight even momentarily of the principles for which we are now preparing to make every sacrifice within our power."¹

The head of the Talks Department—an ex-Indian civil servant from the North-West Frontier of India—was amazed

¹ The full text is in *The Listener*, 10th September, 1939.

when he read the script. "Do you really believe this is why we are at war?" "I do," was my reply, "and if I did not, I would oppose the war. Why do *you* think we are at war?" His reply was: "We are at war to beat the Huns."

This was early evidence of a confusion of thought as to war aims which, in 1939 (as in 1914), soon spread to all sections of the community.

It will be within the recollections of those of my readers who lived through World War I that in the struggle the issues became more and more confused as moral principles were sacrificed to military requirements. Secret treaties, contradictory promises to secure allies and so forth emerged like skeletons at the feast of the victors at Versailles and, notwithstanding the desperate efforts of the idealist, President Wilson, turned that gathering into one of the most prolonged and in some respects discreditable international trading markets of history. The goods being traded were the futures of millions of human beings.

In World War II a similar blurring over of the initial purposes of the war can be observed from a study of various statements. Many of them are reproduced in a book I wrote during the war.¹ These statements only cover the period 1939-41 and the coping stone on the structure which buried deep Mr. Chamberlain's statement of 3rd September, 1939 was the announcement on 15th January, 1943 that the object of the war was the "unconditional surrender" of the German nation.² Eighteen months earlier on 14th August, 1941 the eight point declaration of the Atlantic Charter had been issued by the U.S.A. and Great Britain. Point number eight has a particular and prophetic interest in connection with the question being discussed in this book. Its wording is as follows:

"They (the President of the U.S.A. and Prime Minister of the U.K.) believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. . . ."

¹ *Total Victory* by Stephen King-Hall (Faber & Faber): see pages 124-44.

² Cooked up almost by accident by Roosevelt and Churchill at Casablanca the basic purpose of this militarily foolish document was the product of a statement which would satisfy Stalin, then suspected of toying with the idea of reverting to his 1939-40 policy of co-operating with Hitler.

III

A state of war (*werre*) is the consequence of a conflict of ideas between the governments of sovereign states and this ideological tension must exist—usually for a considerable period of time—before one side decides that it will resort to violence to enforce its will on the other nation. This resort to violence is regarded chiefly as a process of imposing ideas upon the enemy rather than a means of converting him to accepting ideas.

“Diplomatic relations” which is a phrase used to describe the discussion and argument phase of a war are (at any rate theoretically) broken off as soon as violence begins.¹

When the British Prime Minister declared on that historic Sunday morning of 3rd September, 1939 that: “it is the evil things that we shall be fighting against”, he was not announcing a discovery he had made the night before. The “evil things” had been in full display for several years. Yet it was not until it was decided that armed force must be used—and an ultimatum to this effect sent to Hitler—that officially the fight began!

Up till midnight on the 2nd we were not *at War* with Hitler, we were *at Peace*! An absurd and striking example of the stupidity of thinking that war only means military operations.

The historian will look in vain in the records of events from, say, 1936-39 for much evidence that it was—as it should have been—the determined policy of His Majesty’s Government to combat Nazi ideology and “change the minds” of the German people without whose moral support Hitler could not have existed for a week. Yet within a few hours of the end of a period (1936-39), during which the British Government had never shown the slightest indication of getting to work on

¹ In 1923, before the Chinese had picked up some bad habits from the West I helped to referee a local war in and around Amoy between three conflicting factions. With twenty-five British sailors I was in a small British concession 400 yards long and a 100 yards deep. It contained the offices of a British bank and the British Consulate and was a convenient centre at which representatives of the combatants could meet. They did so very frequently and I then learnt that, far from diplomatic relations being broken off, it was considered that simply because the situation had deteriorated into violence it was more necessary than ever to continue to negotiate!

The modern parallel to this sensible old-Chinese attitude can be seen in the summoning of special assemblies of the U.N. in times of grave crisis.

German minds, the British Prime Minister was assuring these Germans that we esteemed them so much that we would shed our blood to rescue them from Hitler! The extent to which we could have changed German minds between 1936-39 and what steps were needed to make the attempt is irrelevant. We never tried to do it notwithstanding the fact that Goebbels was spending millions annually in propaganda to fortify the German mind against a possible democratic attack—a clear indication (as I thought and wrote at the time) that its domestic public opinion was the Achilles' heel of the Nazi régime, as indeed it is of every dictatorship.

However, as War only starts (officially) with the first shot, it is—or it was as recently as 1939—idle to expect anything to be done to win the war by changing the enemy's mind before war degenerates into violence.

Thus was perpetrated the first and most expensive error consequent upon not understanding the true nature of war and its object. An error of omission.

Nevertheless, as we have seen at the outbreak of hostilities the ideological nature of each world war was implied and its object clearly described in the speeches and statements made by national leaders.

Yet the object—to bring the enemy round to our way of thinking—was soon lost sight of. Why was this? Why has it always been so and will be so until people can think clearly about War?

The reason is this: Once military operations begin the issues of life or death present themselves starkly to the individual. Kill or be killed. Death is the most dramatic and tremendous event in the life of a man; he has no anticipations or thoughts about his birth. A good murder story remains unchallenged as the most news-worthy event known to Fleet Street. Military operations are dramatic and exciting.

Up to 1914 there was glamour in violent war and civilians could read at their breakfast tables about the exploits of their professional armed forces secure in the knowledge that, short of military defeat, their contribution to the war was to be "business as usual" and more of it if possible. The 1914-18 violent war began to alter all that, as the flower of the nation perished in Flanders, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia and on the sea

approaches to Britain. By the 1939-45 war the reality of violence came to the homeland and many a charwoman proceeding to her daily task in the office of a great city was on more active service than her son who was in the garrison at (say) Gibraltar.

But because the military operations in Total War are like an insatiable furnace which, in order to be kept at the highest possible temperature, must be fed with all the spiritual and material resources of the nation, the war (by about the third year) and everything to do with it becomes almost indistinguishable from the needs of everyday life. "Is your journey really necessary?" . . . "Save for shells." War becomes the life of the nation and the purpose of the life of the nation is to wage War. Liberties and freedoms are curtailed and even in Britain the executive at certain moments in World War II exercised the powers it had been granted by Parliament to an extent which sailed pretty close to the wind of dictatorship. The citizen is immersed from morning to night in a flood of propaganda designed to achieve the single purpose of "winning the war" which naturally enough appears to be, and to a limited extent is, the achievement of military victory.

Military Victory and then the Victory celebrations—those were the ultimate objectives for most people whilst the ghastly casualties were darkening their lives in World War I and the bombs and V1's and V2's were falling in World War II.

The people at the top are well aware that one day there will be a cease fire and that this will not be the end of what they call "the war". But one cannot blame them for feeling that the less said about this the better as otherwise people's minds would be distracted from the job in hand, which is military victory.

"The art of governing men," said Clemenceau, "is infinitely more complex than that of massacring them."

However comprehensive they may be, military operations and subsidiary activities such as political warfare, special service operations, economic warfare, etc., are only means to the end of Total Victory.

Why *Total Victory*?

The word victory as usually understood and used means in effect military victory and this, if viewed in sober historical

perspective, *can* be too complete and an actual hindrance to the achievement of Total Victory.

What is meant by Total Victory? It means a settlement which is a real peace because both sides regard its terms as beneficial and to be supported. Bearing in mind that I have described war as essentially a conflict of ideas, the state of war can only be ended and transformed into a state of peace when there is no longer a conflict of ideas and when a settlement is reached which embodies agreed ideas. This is Total Victory and genuine Peace. For example: The Treaty of Versailles was the reflection of a military victory. People on the allied side were disposed to say that this result will show the Germans that might is *not* right. It did nothing of the sort. The terms were *imposed* upon the Germans, therefore the thought in the minds of many of them must have been that (irrespective as to whether might was right or wrong) Germany's mistake was in not having had enough might, otherwise Lloyd George and Clemenceau would have been sitting in the dock!

Towards the end of his life Earl Lloyd George told me that he had come to the conclusion that an agreed settlement between the Allies and Germany, which might have been achieved through the Lansdowne proposals in 1917, would have been a wise move. I think he was right.

If war is fundamentally a conflict of ideas, which may in certain circumstances lead to the use of violence in the shape of military operations, and if a Total Victory is a state of affairs in which there is no longer a conflict of ideas but agreement, then there is real Peace and not an armistice.

IV

If the object of war is to change the enemy's mind, the art of defence must be to bring about this change as expeditiously and economically as possible.

It is an axiom that the best method of defence is the attack and I shall have more to say about this at a later stage when we come to the particular defence problems of the U.K. at this time (1957).

Let us in the meanwhile consider what are the ways and means open to a government at war (difference of opinion with another government) to change the enemy's mind?

They fall into two and possibly three categories.

First: Methods which aim at bringing physical pressure to bear on the body so that its brain says: "To avoid further misery I will give in and concede to the victor what he demands." In practice this is the purpose of military operations, which are designed to change the enemy's mind by making him suffer. I call this the Battle of the Bodies.

Second: Methods which aim at persuading the enemy that one's ideas are better than his. This is an operation designed to convert the enemy. It is an appeal to his reason. I call this the Battle of the Brains.

The third category into which mind-changing operations can be classified is a recent arrival on the stage of war. It consists of what is commonly called brain-washing. I am not sure how important from the point of view of the purpose of this study the technique may be but an enquiry might clear up the point. I am disposed to think that the technique is a kind of cross between the Battle of the Bodies and the Battle of the Brains. It is not easy to detect where political warfare of a relatively honest character ends and brain-washing begins. There is no doubt that when the victim is an individual the extreme forms of brain-washing are in truth violent assaults on the brain comparable to blows on the body. But there is also mass brain-washing exemplified in a relatively harmless form by modern advertising and less agreeably in communist indoctrination.¹ I am bound to record that after witnessing the rehabilitation techniques used on Mau Mau adherents in Kenya I was left with many uncertainties to which only time will provide an answer.

The question to be considered is what are the relative advantages and disadvantages of the two main methods of obtaining Total Victory by changing the enemy's mind so that the settlement reached expresses a common point of view? An agreement reached by consent is likely to be more permanent and stable than one based on the triumph of violence and history is littered with examples of defeated nations nurturing feelings of revenge and planning to renew the struggle under more favourable conditions to themselves.

¹ The failure of this to produce results amongst the younger generation in Hungary is very significant (see Chapter II).

Furthermore a victory in the Battle of the Brains can be achieved before the Battle of the Bodies begins and this will save enormous expense and misery and avoid the almost inescapable danger that the Battle of the Bodies will become an end instead of a means.

The ideological nature of war is not changed if the struggle degenerates into military operations any more than the existence of the sun is affected by the presence of a fog which obscures its rays. This is true even if violence leads to a complete military victory for one of the belligerents. It is however an error to suppose that because military operations do not change the nature of war (but only its conduct) they are irrelevant to the solution of the problem of changing the enemy's mind. They can make an important and sometimes an essential contribution.

Before developing this point I must make it clear that for reasons we shall come to later on there are certain degrees of force which, because of their extreme violence, must be excluded from the considerations set forth below.

In the first place an obvious determination (reflected in the existence of armed forces) to resist aggression may cause the potential aggressor to change his mind; so can successful resistance. Whether or not the American colonies could have obtained their independence, or so much of it as they then wanted, without resorting to arms is a speculative question, but that by defeating the British forces in North America they created a climate of opinion in Britain which caused the British Government to abandon the struggle, is an historical fact. In Ireland and in Palestine *terrorism* (by London's definition) or *patriotic struggle* (in Dublin or Tel Aviv language) played a large part in changing the minds of British statesmen.

It should also be observed that a military victory does not of itself compel the victors to impose a settlement on the vanquished which leaves unresolved the basic conflict of ideas which are at the root of the war. A military victory can and indeed should enable the victors to so treat the vanquished that they (the vanquished) concede victory in the Battle of the Brains.

An example of this category was the Boer War 1899-1902. There was a difference of ideas between the British Government

and the Governments of the two Dutch Republics, which degenerated into a situation in which the British determined to enforce their ideas on the Boers. The immediate political object of the war then became the extinction of the independence of these two small sovereign states. After an unexpectedly lengthy campaign military victory was achieved. Within a few years there was a change of government in London and the two Republics were given back their independence within the framework of Dominion status. This settlement was fully supported by the majority of Boer leaders who had fought in the war and led to the Union backing the United Kingdom in World Wars I and II. In this case the military victory was used by the victors to achieve a Total Victory by agreeing to a settlement which was the reverse of what the military victory had been designed to achieve.

The fact that to-day, fifty years later, this achievement and settlement between Europeans in S. Africa is no longer acclaimed as the end of the story by Nationalist leaders in South Africa does not detract from the value of fifty years of peace.

The situation at present (1957) in S. Africa, and in a less acute form in parts of Central Africa, in the racial struggle provides an interesting example illustrative of the truth that one must not think of war only in terms of military conflict.

In the Union of S. Africa, as I observed the situation early in 1957, it was clear that a "war" or conflict of ideas was raging between the S. African Nationalist Government and the emerging leaders of the Bantu people.

The policy and practice of *Apartheid* is a clear cut ideological issue. All the armed force is on the side of the Nationalists. Yet many European S. Africans are apprehensive that the struggle may degenerate into violence (of the Mau Mau type) if the tension increases.

Since the policy of *Apartheid* is economically absurd and politically and morally in flat contradiction to the anti-racial developments taking place all over the world it is almost inconceivable that the Nationalists will succeed (not that they are trying very hard) to change the Bantu mind and get the Bantus to accept *Apartheid*. The Bantu leaders and their European sympathizers are on the other hand endeavouring to win the war by changing the Nationalist mind and the weapons

they are using are economic pressures (boycotts, etc.) and the mobilization of world public opinion. If the Union of South Africa is to avoid a blood bath it seems likely that the Nationalists will have to change their minds about *Apartheid*. The most that force can do is to postpone the day of reckoning.

The factor of world public opinion is an element of increasing importance in War. In the Boer War, to which reference has been made, a study of the Press and Parliamentary debates of that period show that civilized Western opinion was almost unanimously hostile to British policy which, in Western Europe, was regarded as an outstanding example of Imperialism in its most unworthy form and a natural sequel to the scandalous Jameson Raid. But the same sources of information show that the Conservative Government of those days treated this barrage of abuse and criticism from abroad with a lofty contempt. Much has changed in fifty years in this respect; a new factor has entered into the calculations of the political war-operator who is planning his campaign to change the enemy's mind. He has to reckon with the fact that force, if it is to be used, will be more effective if it can be clothed in the garments of international authority. He must consider how to use the Security Council and Assembly of the United Nations. This body is much criticized by those who misapprehend its purpose and expect it to be better than the nations which compose it, but the plain and indisputable fact remains that the most powerful states (and particularly of course the weaker ones) attach an immense amount of importance to making a good case at the U.N. A favourable vote at the U.N., even if when given in the Security Council it obliges the enemy to exercise the veto, is an asset not to be despised and of great value in an international dispute; i.e. a war or *verre*. It is particularly valuable to have the moral force implied in a majority backing at the U.N. if a state decides that the dispute should pass from the political to the military phase. The Korean War was a case in point. Nasser also owes a lot to the U.N.!

It must also be said that a complete military victory does not make it easy for the government of the victorious state to make a peace treaty likely to be reasonably acceptable to the vanquished. Passions and hatreds have been aroused, and deliberately so, on both sides, and statesmen (as at Paris in

1919) find themselves obliged by the pressure of popular opinion to advocate measures they know to be impracticable and unlikely to buttress Peace, e.g. "Hang the Kaiser".

The strategy of Total War demands the dove-tailing into a common effort of political *and* military activities; an extremely difficult exercise in the art of mixing oil and steam!—especially since, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, once military operations have started their fundamental purpose is forgotten and those in charge of political warfare operations, as was shown in both world wars, can never have their strategy and tactics on a firm foundation of war aims. The political warfare command then finds itself operating as a kind of subsidiary department of the military command and asked so to organize its propaganda that specific military operations will be more successful, or that some neutral country will add its military resources to the struggle.

The clash of ideas (i.e. the war)¹ between the democracies and the Soviet Union is a most interesting and instructive example of how the military aspects of war can confuse and obscure its ideological content. When the strife between the Nazis and the democracies degenerated into violence in 1939 Stalin soon revealed which side he was on or thought it wise to be on. He gave the Nazis material aid and Molotov publicly attacked British and French imperialist aggression. When Hitler treacherously attacked his quasi-ally the British Prime Minister went to the microphone and told the nation that Russia was now our ally. This was perfectly correct and tactically proper within the context of military operations but, as events have shown, it made no difference whatsoever to the fundamental difference of ideas (or war) between the democracies and the Communists.

The persistence of this fundamental strife was revealed (although the fact was not known to most of the British public) by the unco-operative behaviour of the Soviet Union even whilst we were military allies. To Stalin the alliance was a mere tactical operation of limited and temporary value to be discarded at the appropriate moment when the main struggle between Communism and democracy could be resumed.

¹ This war which began in 1917 and after many changes in appearance took on a new aspect in 1945-46 is usually called the Cold War.

The British people, convinced that War meant military operations and nothing else, were genuinely confused when they began to discover from Yalta onwards that our relations with "our brothers in arms, our gallant Russian allies" were not at all peaceful but increasingly tense! It seemed incredible, but Russian actions were so obviously menacing that the phrase "the cold war" came into circulation and eventually Nato was born. The Nato Treaty, be it noted, was (Article II excepted) an organization of military force. It reflected the conviction so widely held in the West that, if we were not *at peace*, the *only* contingency which had to be taken care of was an attack by armed force. There was certainly some truth in this, but it was not the whole truth. With one important exception the West took no action to plan a long-term political strategy to deal with the ideological and fundamental struggle with the Communists. The exception was Marshall Aid, which produced massive economic assistance for Western Europe and thus countered the danger that the Communist parties in the West, who were the spearheads of the Soviet offensive, would be able to seize power through the existence of widespread unemployment and social misery.

I have endeavoured in this chapter to take a new look at the nature of war, and for the following reason:

Our defence arrangements, which cost us approximately £1,500,000,000 per annum, are thought of and related to the use of armed force. The maintenance of this force, and if necessary its use, is described as preparation for war (for the safeguarding of peace) or for war if military operations begin. It is my contention, and has been for a number of years, that this mental co-relation of the word war with military force to the virtual exclusion—certainly up to 1946—of any other consideration has led to thinking about our defence problems in too narrow a framework.

This criticism is not quite so valid to-day as it was ten years ago because during the last decade it has been possible to detect the beginnings of an understanding that war between sovereign states comprehends more than the clash of armed force, but the gleam of light which has begun to flicker intermittently in the gloom which has enveloped thinking about the nature of war is not yet very impressive.

The existence of some germs of new thinking in the highest quarters about war is reflected in certain passages in the White Paper on Defence 1957 of which the following are examples (the italics are mine):

"... the time has come to revise not merely the size *but the whole character of the defence plan*. The Communist threat remains, *but its nature has changed*" (para 3).

and:

"... the overriding consideration in *all military planning* must be to prevent war rather than to prepare for it" (para 13).

I find it hard to understand what this means, but it seems to indicate a mental shift of some kind from conventional thinking about war.

We are not told in what respect the nature of the Communist threat has changed. I would welcome enlightenment on this discovery. But the above could be read as meaning that pre-military operation activities are to be given priority. If this interpretation is correct then the importance of the Battle of the Brains is beginning to be recognized at Cabinet level.

On the other hand there is plenty of evidence in the White Paper that Defence and War are still thought of almost exclusively in terms of armed force. For example:

"... the *only* existing safeguard against major aggression is the power *threaten* retaliation with nuclear weapons" (para 14).

or

"... the free world, particularly in Europe, must be firmly defended on the ground. For *only* in this way can it be made clear that aggression will be resisted" (para 20).

Yet, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, if we do not understand or have too restricted an appreciation of the meaning of war, and design our defence arrangements solely in terms of one aspect of war, we are led into grievous error.

In summary the conclusions the reader is asked to consider are as follows:

- (a) War is a relationship between sovereign states.
- (b) This particular relationship is caused by a difference of opinion or conflict of ideas.
- (c) The *object* of war is to change the enemy's mind.
- (d) There are several ways of changing men's minds.
- (e) The two most important are by the power of reason (conversion) and the power of fear (military operations and other violent methods directed against enemy bodies). These two methods are respectively the Battle of the Brains and the Battle of the Bodies.
- (f) The changing of a mind by reason is to be preferred to a change by fear but fear may have a beneficial role if intelligently used.
- (g) Insufficient importance has hitherto been attached to political warfare both before and during military operations.