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from time to time calls attention to published material that might contribute toward clarification or understanding of issues affecting world peace. The accompanying reprints constitute Reprint Mailing No. 101


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The following is quoted from "Is War Becoming Obsolete?"
by John Mueller, from The Seattle Times, April 16, 1989, p.A16:

"Never before in history have so many well-armed, important countries spent so much time not using their arms against each other.

"A large war, nuclear or otherwise, has never been remotely in the interest of the essentially contented, risk-averse, escalation-anticipating countries that have dominated world affairs since 1945. And even allowing considerably for stupidity, ineptness, miscalculation and self-deception, it is difficult to see how they could have gotten into one.

"Major war has become, or is becoming, obsolete. Without being formally renounced or institutionally superseded and without being undercut by notable changes in human nature or in the structure of international politics, major war may have gradually moved toward final discredit. In areas where war was once often casually seen as beneficial, noble and glorious, or at least as necessary or inevitable, the conviction has now become widespread that war would be intolerably costly, unwise, futile and debasing."

(John Mueller, a political scientist, is the author of Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War Basic Books, Inc., 1989)

The following is a transcript of a MacNEIL-LEHRER NEWS HOUR interview by Robert MacNeil with Prime Minister David Lange of New Zealand, April 27, 1989. Reprinted with permission of Al Vecchione, President of MacNeil-Lehrer Productions.

NEWS MAKER GUEST: DAVID LANGE

MR. MAC NEIL: Next tonight the story of a falling out between two allies, the United States and New Zealand, and a News Maker interview with that country's Prime Minister, David Lange, who has broken a nuclear alliance with the United States. Lange was in the U.S. this week, but pointedly was not invited to Washington. Yesterday the State Department publicly rebuked the Prime Minister for telling a Yale University audience that the alliance was effectively dead.

In 1985, Prime Minister Lange announced that he wanted to make his country nuclear free. To that end, he said he would ban ships carrying nuclear weapons from entering New Zealand ports. His position effectively meant all U.S. Navy warships were barred because the United States refused to reverse a 40 year old policy and publicly indicate which ones were carrying nuclear weapons. The Reagan administration reacted angrily, but Lange held firm and made his policy declaration law. His position and the U.S. response, in effect, ended the Anzus Pact, a defense arrangement in place between 1951, between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. Like other American alliances, it relied on the nuclear deterrent. But Lange was determined to create a nuclear free zone in the South Pacific. New Zealand was in the forefront of efforts to stop French nuclear testing in its Polynesian territories. That campaign led to the bungled attempt by French intelligence agents to blow up a boat in the New Zealand Harbor in July of 1985. The environmentalist group known as Green Peace was planning to use the boat to monitor a French nuclear test. The so-called "rainbow warrior" incident was a major embarrassment for the French, provoking an angry reaction worldwide and strengthening Lange's anti-nuclear resolve. American worries about New Zealand policies surfaced again today when Vice President Quayle arrived in Australia as part of his Asian tour. Quayle discussed the future of the Anzus alliance with Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The Australian leader attempted to dismiss Lange's threat to leave the Anzus Pact as only hypothetical. I interviewed the New Zealand Prime Minister yesterday in New York.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for joining us. Is the U.S. cold shoulder hurting New Zealand?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: No, it doesn't. I think probably in a curious way it has the opposite effect. I think that's one of the problems of being big and small. And that's something which maybe different strategies might have had a different effect on New Zealand. But New Zealanders are able to make their estimate of Americans. And they know that my arrival in the White House would be a precursor of the arrival of nuclear weapons in New Zealand, because the administration has been very straightforward. It's said, look, if you want to come back to normal, you do so without weapons in your harbors, and that's a very honorable, straightforward thing to say. It's something which I decline with thanks and so I don't go to Washington.

MR. MAC NEIL: The Reagan administration clearly hoped and the Bush administration continues to hope, I gather, that by putting this kind of pressure on you, you will change your mind by withdrawing access to U.S. military intelligence and so on and, in effect, rendering cooperation under the Anzus Pact void bilaterally, that they will get you to change your mind, are they going to?

PRIME MINISTER DAVID LANGE, New Zealand: No, they're not. And what's sort of marvelous about it is that they're quite straightforward. They say to us adequate corrective measures must be taken, Vice President Quayle says, should resume port visits, and then everything will be right. In other words, they're not asking for conciliation or negotiation. They're asking for New Zealand to completely reverse its policy arrived at democratically and endorsed in two elections. Well, we're not going to. I'm sorry, but we're not going to. And that is something that I tell you without provocation or without irritation. I think it's actually...New Zealand feels secure. You have to look at the world to understand why New Zealand's taken the step it has. Our hemisphere is water,

except for Australia or Indonesia, a little bit of South America and Antarctica. Now, that's the truth to it. We're on assault course to the Antarctic. And as far as I know, there is no power on this earth that wants to go and invade the Antarctic.

MR. MAC NEIL: Let's come back to the diplomatic strains or relationship for just a moment. It must be strange for the head of a friendly government to come to this country and be afforded none of the usual courtesies or honors or anything else. Does that have some diminishing effect psychologically on your country? Do your countrymen feel slighted?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: You've got to work out what New Zealanders are like; 3 million people an awful long way from everywhere else, innovative, they have to be, they've got to cope. They don't feel slighted. They feel as though that's a recognition that they're able to stand up for their own principles. What would be demeaning to New Zealand would be that if someone said dip on your dip...kneel on your knee!...have our ships in your harbors and you can come to my house. That's demeaning. What's not demeaning is a great nation, a super power saying, your policy is not compatible with our policy and until your policy becomes our policy we can't play ball together. That's not demeaning to New Zealand. It might be demeaning to the United States.

MR. MAC NEIL: Would you explain the rationale as simply as you can, the rationale for your decision to exclude ships carrying nuclear weapons.

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Yeah. Because nuclear weapons have no part in our defense strategy, never have. The previous government always said they weren't there. We were told, quite honestly, by the United States that from time to time if their vessels came to New Zealand, they would be nuclear armed. We said, how on earth can an upward escalation of nuclear armaments serve us? Nuclear weapons are illogical in our defense. We come from a maritime region where the dangers are from famine, turbulence, earthquake, all sorts of disturbances that can happen. Cyclones are the biggest threat to the Islands the Pacific at the moment. That is not to discount the huge responsibilities the United States takes internationally. It's just that New Zealand does not fit into a nuclear strategy and rejects. New Zealand has to ask a couple of more questions. Would New Zealand be offended by nuclear weapons? We plead no. If we are threatened by conventional force, should the threat of nuclear weapons be used to deter those who would offer that force? Again, we plead no. Our assessment is that it is no better to be annihilated by a nuclear weapon fired in defense than anger. It is something which is aberrant and we regard as an obscene intrusion into our region. It's likely to cause a deterioration in stability, rather than an enhancement of it. Now that is because we have a particular strategic perspective. It's our world and it's important to us that we have a good level of security in it. Nuclear weapons don't give us that. We took a limited measure of arms control. We don't preach it because it's different for all different circumstances. Good things have happened. We are told that if we took this step, the mosaic of Western solidarity would crumble, arms reductions would be impossible and we, of course, have seen in the last five years an amelioration of tension, a reduction of...an elimination of one class of nuclear armaments, a very good series of developments between President Reagan and Gorbachev and hopefully between President Bush and Gorbachev. That's good for the world. We're doing what's good for New Zealand.

MR. MAC NEIL: What if other countries, for example, Denmark shares some of your feelings and as a central member of NATO decided to take the same policy, adopt the same policy, would not the Western, would not the mosaic of the Western alliance really begin to crumble?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Well, the Americans have handled that in the past. France has an independent nuclear strategy. Denmark has had a difference of views. Spain has had a series of differences. Greece, of course, it was called the Greek disease until the New Zealanders came along. All of those have been handled. All of those have been I suppose changed according to the strategic importance of that particular partner. But what I have to say to you is that New Zealand has never embraced the handle of the nuclear umbrella. It for us was not a unilateral disarmament decision. It was a decision not to escalate the level of armament.

MR. MAC NEIL: What do you say to the argument that's made here, for instance by the Heritage Foundation which is a conservative think tank here, that what you are doing is undermining the

Western alliance in the Pacific and its ability to respond to a nuclear threat, for instance, by making it more difficult for the U.S. to find alternative bases for ships that might carry nuclear weapons if they were excluded from the Philippines after 1991?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: What can I tell you this for one simple fact, that there will never be an alternative in New Zealand for the Philippines base. And if the Heritage Foundation were to look on a map of the world, they would see how grotesque that suggestion is. The notion that those huge bases in the Philippines poised presumably for very very sensible strategic impact in that part of the world should suddenly become effective, having migrated thousands of miles to the South, is absurd as well as impractical. And the fact is that Australia has been the host of transit vessels in the past. Australia, itself, cannot be host to a replacement Philippines base, because Australia is a member of the South Pacific nuclear free zone treaty and is contracted not to deploy nuclear weapons there. I, therefore, while I have enormous respect for people who think deeply and ruminate fondly on a world that was existing in the 1950s that the Heritage Foundation do not accept for a moment their thesis that somehow or other New Zealand would block a redeployment from the Philippines, it is nonsense.

MR. MAC NEIL: What about the continuation of that argument, and that is by spreading and prosletizing for the idea of a nuclear free zone in the Pacific you make it more difficult for the U.S. to counter the increasing Soviet naval presence in the Pacific?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Well, let's challenge you on that. You see, the evidence of the Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, our Governor General, was that notwithstanding the rhetoric of some think tanks the naval presence of the Soviet Union in the South Pacific was actually reduced from what it was. Now, do you see, how does the South Pacific nuclear free zone inhibit the United States in that? And the answer is that it does not at all. The South Pacific nuclear free zone allows international countries the right of free passage through international waters unmolested by the South Pacific nuclear free zone treaty, so you want to give...they put up a man of heavy straw and then they use the heavy artillery to knock it down. The South Pacific nuclear free zone allows the United States to go, the seventh fleet to charge through in grand style, all those vast ocean tracts, and to suggest that it stops them is just contrary to fact and law.

MR. MAC NEIL: Let me put another argument to you, which I'm sure you've heard, but this argument is made. In Europe, the Western alliance started down the anti-nuclear movement and insisted on keeping its NATO commitment to deploy the medium range missiles with the, they argue, very positive result of ultimately the IBM Treaty, and that the United States should continue to stare down the anti-nuclear movement in the Pacific for the same reasons because good will come of it in the end.

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: That's right. That's what they say. I think there's a lot of sense to that. In Europe, the analysis in Europe is that unilateral assignment would have been a rather stupid, quite unproductive thing to have done. Let's accept that. Does that mean that the South Pacific is the same? We are utterly different in the South Pacific. Wherein lies the impulse to suddenly arm Antarctica. Who's going to make a nuclear base out of the islands? What military force in the world is going to position itself in Tonga? I mean, the idea is grotesque. It does not take account of practical reality. We have in Europe a situation where each is looking down the barrel of batteries of missiles a bus ride away. I have to tell you that New Zealand and the Southwest Pacific is actually a very long way. That is not to give us a false sense of security. We have our own security problems. But they are not the problems of the potential for a nuclear eruption arising in the South Pacific. A volcanic eruptions is a bigger threat.

MR. MAC NEIL: I've put all the negative arguments to you. What do you hope positively to achieve beyond the range of your own domestic politics by adopting this policy? What wider purpose do you have?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Well, it challenges us to be, have a regional security proposal and be self-reliant, and that means that we have to embrace policies which are economically provident for countries who need to buttress themselves so that they maintain a hope of economic as well as political independence, and...

MR. MAC NEIL: Which countries are you talking about?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Oh, you have got the whole range of them. You've got the Cook Islands, you've got Samar...New Guinea...all countries which are potentially post colonial trouble countries and who have economies which don't match their political independence with economic independence. That really is our forward fortress of serenity. Given disturbances there, we can have low level military contingencies which we must never allow to escalate to the point where super power intervention becomes necessary. That is one of the fallacies about Anzus. The United States is not stupid. It never provided a security guarantee to New Zealand. It never said to New Zealand or Australia, get into a scrap, mate, and we're there with you. How appalling that would be, that if you got into problems in the Southwest Pacific, a super power with nuclear competence suddenly landed up to join you. The United States wouldn't buy into that and I'm glad they didn't. Now what we have to do is we have to have our regional security and we have to make sure that we can cope and we have, therefore, adjusted our military forces accordingly. Our armed forces are no longer a fragment of someone else's book, explicable on their own terms.

MR. MAC NEIL: You're approaching an election in New Zealand.

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Eighteen months.

MR. MAC NEIL: Eighteen months away. The National Party, as I understand it, your opponents, would reverse this policy if they were elected, is that correct?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: It's hard to know. My suspicion is that they would, but they are I think having some emissaries in Washington at extremely high levels this week and the only conclusion one can draw from that is that they would, at least they'd tell Washington they would. Whether they would tell the New Zealand domestic electorate they would is another matter. It would depend on whether they wanted to get elected or not. But it's not a black and white issue in New Zealand. There's no party in the last election that stood against the government and said, look, you've got to go because we've got to get these nuclear weapons back in New Zealand. No one did that.

MR. MAC NEIL: What will determine whether you actually formally withdraw from the Anzus Pact?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: We'll have to evaluate our options. What happens is that Anzus, of course, is still alive and cannot be unilaterally destroyed and this very important treaty is between Australia and the United States. It also curiously is the bilateral leg of our relationship with Australia. So there's no proposal to torpedo the treaty. What it provides for is a council of ministers and a meeting thereof and we have been excluded from those meetings for some four years. Now it seems to me that if that's going to be a problem, we probably ought to accept the inevitable, recognize the reality, give notice of our withdrawal from a council that we're not allowed to attend.

MR. MAC NEIL: If you had your way, what ideally would you like the United States to do in response to your stand?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Accept the reality that there is a way in which we can cooperate with conventional weapons.

MR. MAC NEIL: And restore access to U.S. intelligence and all forms of military cooperation?

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: If you're a policeman, sometimes you go in with a warrant, sometimes you go in with handcuff, sometimes you go in with a truncheon, sometimes you go in with a pistol, and sometimes you go in with a machine gun. We are prepared to deal with the low level contingencies of conventional armaments and we stop at nuclear weapons.

MR. MAC NEIL: Well, Prime Minister Lange, we thank you very much for joining us.

PRIME MINISTER LANGE: Thank you.

THE SEVILLE STATEMENT ON VIOLENCE

Believing that it is our responsibility to address from our particular disciplines the most dangerous and destructive activities of our species, violence and war; recognizing that science is a human cultural product which cannot be definitive or all encompassing; and gratefully acknowledging the support of the authorities of Seville and representatives of the Spanish UNESCO; we, the undersigned scholars from around the world and from relevant sciences, have met and arrived at the following Statement on Violence. In it, we challenge a number of alleged biological findings that have been used, even by some in our disciplines, to justify violence and war. Because the alleged findings have contributed to an atmosphere of pessimism in our time, we submit that the open, considered rejection of these mis-statements can contribute significantly to the International Year of Peace.

Misuse of scientific theories and data to justify violence and war is not new but has been made since the advent of modern science. For example, the theory of evolution has been used to justify not only war, but also genocide, colonialism, and suppression of the weak.

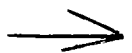
We state our position in the form of five propositions. We are aware that there are many other issues about violence and war that could be fruitfully addressed from the standpoint of our disciplines, but we restrict ourselves here to what we consider a most important first step.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors. Although fighting occurs widely throughout animal species, only a few cases of destructive intra-species fighting between organized groups have ever been reported among naturally living species, and none of these involve the use of tools designed to be weapons. Normal predatory feeding upon other species cannot be equated with intra-species violence. Warfare is a peculiarly human phenomenon and does not occur in other animals.

The fact that warfare has changed so radically over time indicates that it is a product of culture. Its biological connection is primarily through language which makes possible the coordination of groups, the transmission of technology, and the use of tools. War is biologically possible, but it is not inevitable, as evidenced by its variation in occurrence and nature over time and space. There are cultures which have not engaged in war for centuries, and there are cultures which have engaged in war frequently at some times and not at others.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature. While genes are involved at all levels of nervous system function, they provide a developmental potential that can be actualized only in conjunction with the ecological and social environment. While individuals vary in their predispositions to be affected by their experience, it is the interaction between their genetic endowment and conditions of nurturance that determines their personalities. Except for rare pathologies, the genes do not produce individuals necessarily predisposed to violence. Neither do they determine the opposite. While genes are co-involved in establishing our behavioural capacities, they do not by themselves specify the outcome.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour. In all well-studied species, status within the group is achieved by the ability to cooperate and to fulfil social functions relevant to the structure of that group. 'Dominance' involves social bondings and affiliations; it is not simply a matter of the possession and use of superior physical power, although it does involve aggressive behaviours. Where genetic selection for aggressive behaviour has been artificially instituted in animals, it has rapidly succeeded in producing hyper-aggressive individuals; this indicates that aggression was not maximally selected under natural conditions. When such experimentally-created hyper-aggressive animals are present in a social group, they either disrupt its social structure or are driven out. Violence is neither in our evolutionary legacy nor in our genes.



IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that humans have a 'violent brain'. While we do have the neural apparatus to act violently, it is not automatically activated by internal or external stimuli. Like higher primates and unlike other animals, our higher neural processes filter such stimuli before they can be acted upon. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to react violently.

IT IS SCIENTIFICALLY INCORRECT to say that war is caused by 'instinct' or any single motivation. The emergence of modern warfare has been a journey from the primacy of emotional and motivational factors, sometimes called 'instincts,' to the primacy of cognitive factors. Modern war involves institutional use of personal characteristics such as obedience, suggestibility, and idealism, social skills such as language, and rational considerations such as cost-calculation, planning, and information processing. The technology of modern war has exaggerated traits associated with violence both in the training of actual combatants and in the preparation of support for war in the general population. As a result of this exaggeration, such traits are often mistaken to be the causes rather than the consequences of the process.

We conclude that biology does not condemn humanity to war, and that humanity can be freed from the bondage of biological pessimism and empowered with confidence to undertake the transformative tasks needed in this International Year of Peace and in the years to come. Although these tasks are mainly institutional and collective, they also rest upon the consciousness of individual participants for whom pessimism and optimism are crucial factors. Just as 'wars begin in the minds of men', peace also begins in our minds. The same species who invented war is capable of inventing peace. The responsibility lies with each of us.

Seville, May 16, 1986

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The following is quoted from "Connecting with the Earth" by David C. Atwood, from *RECONCILIATION International* May 1989, p 5: (Mr. Atwood is General Secretary, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, The Netherlands)

"Real social change comes from a shift in collective understanding which reaches beyond the intellectual and rational.

"Recent arms control progress and the improvement in East/West relations provide a useful analogy. What is responsible for the radical shift that has made these present developments possible? In part, it has been a collective realization of the threat nuclear weapons pose. In part, it has been a growing understanding that high levels of military spending actually threaten real security. But more than this, progress has been possible because of a welling up of the wish by people on both sides to move from the system of threat and hatred that has dominated the last 40 years. The system itself has come to be seen as a threat to our very humanity."

[T]he difficulties in adapting to nuclear reality may not be entirely of a cognitive nature. People have the capability to grasp the new condition, but there is some resistance to doing so consistently and to adapting traditional policies fully to this new condition. This suggests there may be conflicting motives involved, one set of motives desires to adapt to the new reality and another to persevere in the pre-nuclear mode.

—Steven Kull
Minds at War

would have some incentive to shoot first as a last resort. Thus, steps taken to reduce the risk of premeditated war by exploring or improving one's nuclear arsenal by either superpower may only raise the risk of preemptive war.

The recognition that nuclear strategy is a contradiction in terms has long been a staple of the academic literature. Military strategy necessarily implies a rational economy of force, some proportionality between means and ends. By sheer destructiveness and indiscriminateness, however, the Bomb demolishes any meaningful distinction between winning and losing and turns means-ends calculation into an absurdity. With the advent of nuclear interdependence, strategy has reached a dead end.

Steven Kull appreciates many of the dilemmas of deterrence and the resulting contradictions in policy, especially in proposals that call for overmatching the other side's nuclear arsenal, qualitatively or quantitatively; for deploying weapons with a capacity to destroy the other side's weapons and command-and-control (so-called "hard-target kill" capability); for "prevailing" in the event of a nuclear war; and for trying to develop strategic defenses to protect populations against nuclear attack.

Kull's book, *Minds at War*, breaks new ground by going beyond the clash of nuclear doctrine with nuclear reality. It exposes these doctrinal dilemmas through conversations with practicing Russian and American nuclear strategists. Kull's is an insistent voice, probing

RUNNING FOR COVER

(Reprinted with permission from *COMMONWEAL* 10 Feb/1989 pp. 83-84)

MINDS AT WAR

Steven Kull

Basic Books, \$19.95, 352 pp.

Leon V. Sigal

Nuclear strategy seems driven by rationalism, at least at first glance. Strategists act in the belief that they can master the forces of nature by careful calculation—not only in peacetime, but also in times of crisis or war. In Herman Kahn's words, "The presence of nuclear weapons is likely to prove a powerful inducement to clear and/or cautious thinking."

Beneath the surface of cool rationality, however, the very logic of nuclear deter-

rence is rife with contradiction. How can the United States deter the Soviet Union by threats that it manifestly would have little or no incentive to carry out? So long as each superpower has nuclear forces capable of surviving attack and retaliating in kind, how can more nuclear weapons—or more accurate ones—add to deterrence?

Once the Soviet Union as well as the United States acquired that capability, it became difficult to raise the cost of war to one side without doing so for the other. Under this condition of nuclear interdependence, deterrence means manipulating the shared risk of a nuclear war neither side can afford. Yet attempts at manipulation could provoke unintended war in a crisis. Should either superpower come to believe that war is imminent, it

inconsistencies in strategists' reasoning as they shift back and forth between two strains of nuclear thought: an *adaptive* strain that acknowledges the profound impact that nuclear weapons have had on strategy and diplomacy, and tries to adjust to it; and a *traditional* strain that denies the difference that nuclear weapons make.

The traditional strain, which gets most of Kull's attention, assumes that nuclear devices are weapons like any other, hence usable and likely to be used. It follows that the more weapons the United States has, the better it is for deterrence, and that marginal superiority will reassure allies and instill caution in foes. Even as some acknowledge the irrationality of actually engaging in a nuclear war, those in the grip of traditionalism still cling, almost desperately says Kull, to prenuclear thought in a vain attempt to deny present-day reality.

At one level, Kull's conversations with U.S. and Soviet analysts and policymakers, in government and out, bring home the wisdom of Orwell's observation that "political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible...designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give the appearance of solidity to mere wind." But Kull has a deeper intent. As a practicing psychologist he recognizes the poignancy, indeed the pain, that internally inconsistent beliefs can produce and the struggle of patients to ignore, deny, or otherwise cope with that inconsistency. Behind the confusion, evasion, ambivalence, and denial he discerns not logic, but psycho-logic at work.

Exploring the irrational resistance of prenuclear attitudes to change, Kull uncovers the symbolic value of the Bomb: Nuclear weapons are ~~totems~~ so meaningful that strategists ~~seem~~ willing to worship them even if doing so sacrifices security. He cites the desire to deploy hard-target kill capability as "an expression of a wish to make nuclear war [somehow] controllable...of the urge to assimilate nuclear war into a conventional war paradigm."

Perhaps so, but Kull neglects to mention that nuclear disarmers may be no less in thrall of the Bomb as symbol. Drastic

cuts, it is true, may lower the risk of an accident, but under present conditions, there is no reason to believe that the fewer weapons the superpowers have, the safer the world would be. With weapons of this magnitude, the difference between 500 and 25,000 is not as significant as those who press for reductions want to think. The crucial question is not numbers but the *kind* of weapons. (For example, deploying even a relatively small number of accurate MX or SS18 missiles in vulnerable silos arguably increases the risk that the other side will resort to first strike in the event of a crisis.)

Nor is there any reason to believe that the abolition of nuclear weapons would make the world safest of all. Lacking the means of retaliation or the certainty that covert production of nuclear weapons can be detected, how could disarmed states assure they would not become vulnerable to nuclear attack? Would the balance of power in a disarmed world, with many states capable of covertly producing nuclear devices as a hedge against uncertainty, be *more* precarious than it is today?

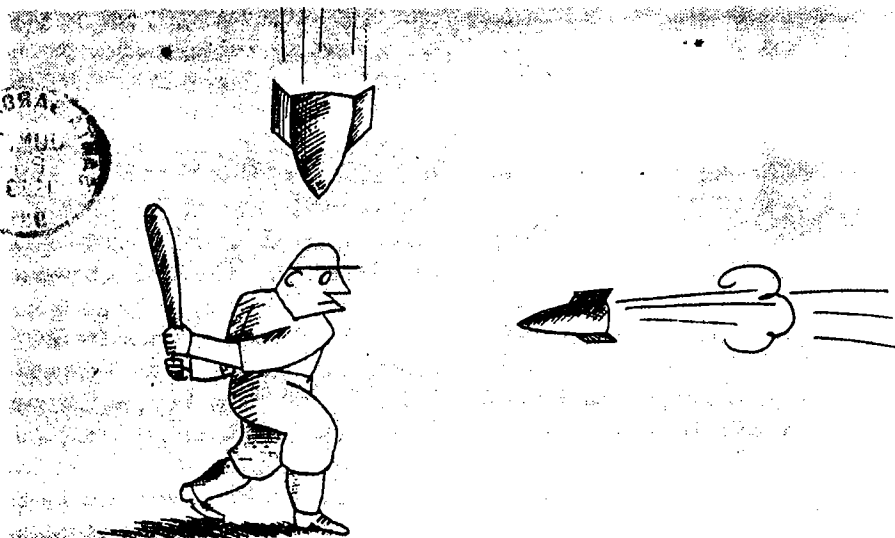
Kull does not go far enough in exposing the contradictions in nuclear thinking. Traditionalists who advocate waging and winning nuclear wars do not stand alone in their inconsistency. The adaptivists whom Kull favors, as I do, reject prenuclear thought that superiority matters. They attempt to adapt to nuclear interdependence by advocating arms

control agreements and reduced reliance on nuclear deterrence. But this position poses contradictions of its own. How can reducing the threat of nuclear war bolster deterrence? How rational is it to base deterrence on the threat that any war may escalate out of control even if neither side intended it?

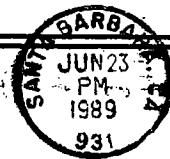
Neither the adaptive nor the traditional strain in strategic thought can escape the fundamental contradiction posed by nuclear interdependence, between deterring premeditated war by policies that, in a crisis, invite preemptive war.

Consistency of belief, however, may be no improvement over inconsistency. For instance, the assumption that nuclear war is inevitable may undergird the belief system of some traditionalists. That assumption avoids many, though not all, of the contradictions in their doctrine. Yet restoring consistency in that way may turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, one that hardly makes the world a safer place.

Deep-seated resistance to a change of mind is a well-documented finding of cognitive psychology. It is difficult to square that finding with Kull's optimistic conclusion that the "rationality" of the adaptivists will triumph and that security will ultimately dominate symbolism. Nuclear weapons do have profound effects on today's world. Perhaps most profound is their capacity to mock man's rationality. That may be what strategists have in mind when they talk about thinking the unthinkable. □



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