As a public service,

THE LAUCKS FOUNDATION

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. 62.

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THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY

DECIDING on the differences—and the priorities—of individual and social responsibilities may be the most important issue of our time. Where does the solution for our problems lie—in power or in moral integrity? The common practice is to give lip service to the ideal of integrity, but to rely on power as the practical answer to what we think needs to be done.

To whom should we turn for guidance or counsel in this decision? Judging from history, the power-seekers are the ones who gain approval from the great majority. Without power, the argument goes, you can't accomplish any important changes.

But there are also those who look at history with a more penetrating eye. They incline to the view that the fundamental changes needed in human beings are moral, and they say that here power is plainly impotent. No human was ever made better, wiser, more considerate of others by either threats or punishment. They argue that no population has ever been improved in quality through the exercise of power. They also point out that the underlying decencies of human beings may seem to justify the uses of power, but that there is little if any relationship between the two.

This is of course a minority report. Yet how shall we regard the fact that the wise have always been *very* few? Is there here instruction in the realities of human evolution or development, and has the time come to take such men as Tolstoy and Gandhi seriously, such women as Simone Weil? What do they say? A brief expression by Joseph Weizenbaum, teacher at M.I.T., seems an apt summary of what they say:

> For the present dilemma, the operative rule is that the salvation of the world—and that *is* what I am talking about—depends on converting others to sound ideas. That rule is false. The salvation of the world depends only on the individual whose world it is. At least, every individual must act as if the whole future of the world, of humanity itself, depends on him.

We leave this statement stark and unadorned by persuasion. Its validity lies in its consequences, which a fresh study of history may reveal.

Church/world watch

Morality & the question of means

Commonweal: 20 April 1984

J. Bryan Hehir

AMONG ELECTED officials, speaking well is a vocational imperative, writing well is a rare commodity. Our country has had a tradition of political leaders who were superb writers; very few are in evidence today. Senator Moynihan of New York is a welcome exception. He writes often and very well indeed. Given the range of topics which he addresses and his penchant for finding unexpected modes of analysis, it is almost impossible for a consistent reader to agree with him all the time, but equally impossible not to be engaged by him and to feel rewarded by the effort. His most recent product, a slim volume with the intriguing title *Loyalties*, is a fascinating contribution to a controverted theme in the U.S. foreign policy debate.

Moynihan's focus, as I read him, is on an *ethic of means* as a guide for foreign policy. The first essay in *Loyalties* is on the MX missile, the last one on international law. Both highlight the significance of the means used to project American policy in the world. Moynihan's concerns are with the wisdom of policy choices and the morality of political action. The means question is a way to test both morality and wisdom.

Moynihan's own general position in the foreign policy debate — he is often described as a Jacksonian Democrat — provides a strategic place from which to highlight the question of means. It is sometimes asserted — and more often simply assumed without assertion — that the nature of the U.S.-Soviet competition renders a concern for means a luxury — even a dangerous distraction — in the policy debate. One of Michael Novak's persistent criticisms of the U.S. bishops' recent pastoral letter has been that it focuses on the *means* of the superpower rivalry (nuclear weapons) and fails to address the *nature* of the two systems in conflict. Novak, the *Wall Street Journal*, and others have found the French bishops' statement more persuasive because of its stress on the threat from the East and its much briefer, almost cryptic examination of the means issue in nuclear policy. Senator Moynihan's credentials in criticism of the Soviet Union are impeccable and quite visibly displayed in *Loyalties*. But he argues persuasively (using the U.S. bishops' pastoral) that a failure to address the means question leads to bad policy — in both the normative and empirical sense of the phrase.

The essay on the MX deployment is particularly compelling. The Scowcroft Commission, which was instrumental in shaping the case for congressional approval of the MX program, argued in the end that the U.S. had to build the MX to demonstrate its political will to the Soviets. Moynihan, always alert to Soviet perceptions of the United States, contends that a fixation on standing strong (or tall) without consideration of *how* we plan to demonstrate our political will can lead to disaster. He describes the MX as "perhaps the most fatal mistake in our history." The reason is the impact of MX deployment on the larger dynamic of the strategic balance: "What we do know is that these missiles, the most powerful and accurate we had ever developed, would be deployed in a mode so vulnerable as practically to invite a preemptive Soviet strike."

This sentence needs to be unpacked. The MX invites attack precisely because it poses a threat (of "hard target kill") to major Soviet systems *and* because the MX is vulnerable to attack. The unique combination of power and vulnerability (a mirror image of Soviet SS-18s and 19s) produces in both superpowers exactly the wrong inclinations: moves toward a launch-on-warning strategy. In brief, the wrong means of defense produces a strategy that is indefensible strategically or morally. In Moynihan's words, "The vote to deploy the MX in a launch-on-warning mode indicated either an absence of principle or else its abandonment. There will be no return to principle unless we teach ourselves how to weigh the moral dimensions and dilemmas of the decisions we are required to make."

It is precisely this task, informing the strategic debate with a structure of principles, that the Pastoral Letter addressed. Moynihan has relied upon *The Challenge of Peace* in his effort to oppose MX deployment. Alongside the continuing discussion of how the pastoral is being used in the church, more attention should be given to how others are using it in the wider political and public debate. The MX debate is not over — deployment has been approved but has not occurred. The issue is one which turns on our ethic of means; the logic of the pastoral can provide support for those who sense the danger of this "fatal mistake."

What means we choose are the measure of policy in areas beyond the nuclear question. The burden of the final essay in *Loyalties* is the role of international law as a guide for policy choices. Moynihan's thesis, that an absence of concern for law cripples our choices and erodes our principles, is carefully argued. On the basis of the

(Continued

thesis he criticizes Carter on Iran and Reagan on Grenada. But the scope of the argument extends beyond these cases to the entire posture of the United States in world politics. Unfortunately, the most pressing instance where the thesis might be tested receives only a passing reference — U.S. support of covert activity against Nicaragua. Moynihan's key position as vice chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence provides him with a special perspective — and responsibility — on the Nicaragua question. He has not been absent from the debate, but his stance has been decidedly ambiguous. Publicly, he has repeatedly criticized the administration for behavior indicating that our Nicaraguan intervention effectively involves an attempt to overthrow a government. Yet his votes and activity in committee suggest a willingness to accept at face value the administration's rationale that it is only interdicting arms shipments to El Salvador.

The logic of Senator Moynihan's argument in *Loyalties* against the Grenada action should lead *a fortiori* to a firm opposition to current U.S. Nicaraguan policy. A particularly pertinent sentence: "What does it mean to be an American if not to know that law in fact protects the weak?" One can object to aspects of Nicaragua's domestic and international policies and still draw from this sentence the demand that U.S. responses must be measured and limited by an ethic of means — must, in other words, support both law and moral norms.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

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The following is quoted from REFLECTIONS, "Weapons and Hope" by Freeman Dyson. The New Yorker, Feb. 13, 1984, pp. 78-79:

"There are many ways in which one may try to discourage nuclear proliferation. One way is to negotiate non-proliferation treaties. Another way is to establish nuclear-free zones. Another way is to place embargoes on the export of nuclear apparatus to countries that are unwilling to submit their nuclear activities to international inspection. Another way is to organize political opposition to commercial nuclear power stations. Another way is to demolish, by air attack or sabotage, facilities that are believed to be incipient nuclear-weapons projects. All these ways have been tried, and all have been partly successful. But all have the disadvantage of treating symptoms rather than the underlying disease. The only way to cure the underlying disease is to extinguish the desire for nuclear weapons. To extinguish the desire, it is necessary to convince political leaders that the possession of nuclear weapons brings trouble and danger rather than strength and safety."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY, June 10, 1984

America's global juggling act: how long will it last?

By Paul Chamsol

AMERICAN hegemony, which came into being in 1945, has been in a state of crisis since the end of the 1960s. Believing its positions to be seriously threatened, American big business has been doing its best, for almost the last ten years, to apply the principle that attack is the best means of defence. Threatened by what? Hardly by the Soviet Union, which has pulled off only limited political and military successes — and which usefully provides official justification for US ascendancy over the other Western powers; hardly, either, by the movement for the liberation and development of the Third World, which has failed so far to shake off the economic and financial suzerainty of the North; and surely not by the emergence of a revolutionary movement within the United States. No, the only genuine threat to the Americans at the moment, because it hinges on essentials (the carving up of the immediate profit), is the ever more rapid development of other capitalist countries, which are now increasingly pressing for a "multipolar world" in which they would occupy their right and proper place.

It is that conflict of interests, and that alone, which has been responsible for the world crisis of the last ten years and more. Yet no one wanted that crisis. From 1971 on, the US government secretly encouraged rises in oil prices. In 1973-74, it played a decisive role in triggering off the first oil shock. According to an American commentator, V. H. Oppenheim, whose source was none other than the chief initiator of the operation (see Foreign Policy, winter 1976-77), Washington's aim was to encourage oil production and the development of new energy sources through high crude oil prices, to neutralise economic competition from Europe and Japan, both of them heavily dependent on imported oil, and to boost American exports to the OPEC countries by increasing the latters' purchasing power. Thus, capitalist interests had once again let loose forces they were unable to control; they did not achieve their goals, but meanwhile the world economy moved into crisis. This, says Oppenheim, represented not only a "betrayal of our alliances" with Europe and Japan, but "a cosmic blunder".

For similar reasons, world political equilibrium was again upset in 1979. At that time, US world ascendancy was more than ever threatened: West Germany had turned the oil crisis to its own advantage by stepping up its exports, chiefly of capital goods, to the OPEC countries (they rose from $2,200 million in 1973 to $11,900 million in 1978), it succeeded in surrounding itself with a prosperous and stable area of economic influence through the setting up of the European Monetary System (EMS), and they found a staunch ally in Valery Giscard d'Estaing's France. Japan adopted a similarly independent policy with its own interests in mind. It was then that the Americans suddenly changed the rules of the game. But this time they went one step further: they held peace to ransom.

First came the second oil shock. Using the Iranian revolution as a pretext, the oil companies created an artificial oil shortage by building up their stocks and ordering their tankers at sea to move at a snail's pace. Prices shot up by 60 per cent, cancelling out Europe's and Japan's efforts to achieve a balance of payments surplus and placing the newly fledged EMS on a knife edge.

The second change came in the wake of shock when, with the prospect of recession in the United States and rising interest rates, a political U-turn in Washington resulted in Paul Volcker being appointed head of the Federal Reserve. Steps were taken to attract capital to the United States at the precise moment when its competitors, still reeling from the second oil shock, most needed it. Between January 1979 and January 1980, gold prices went up by a total of 277 per cent. That increase enabled the American treasury to recover or tie up a large proportion of the dollars held abroad or in the bank accounts of wealthy Americans. The period of the expensive dollar had begun.

The third change concerned international relations. A few months after the official signing of the SALT II accords, the Americans suddenly discovered that the Soviet Union posed an intolerable threat to world peace, that a crash rearmament programme was necessary, and that an overtly hostile attitude should be adopted towards Moscow. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was seen as "the last straw". As a result, Europe and Japan, which had fondly believed they were about to be able to play a world role again, became a possible proving ground for a third world war.

Neither President Jimmy Carter nor US economic and financial leaders had any intention of declaring such a war. They simply wanted to make it credible — in other words, to pursue a policy of brinkmanship. International tension, which proved such a powerful stimulant for Volcker's exceptionally high interest rates, engendered a veritable economic divorce between Europe and the United States. Here indeed was the much-dreaded "decoupling".

Even Switzerland ceased to be a safe haven. It was all very well for Europe to try putting up its own interest rates (thus dragging itself deeper into recession): enormous amounts of capital continued to be lured across the Atlantic from the threatened Old World. Thus, direct foreign investment in the United States tripled in five years. Purely financial investment rose even faster. Many wealthy European families decided they needed an apartment in New York, Houston or Los Angeles to use as a bolt-hole if ever war in Europe seemed a serious possibility. There was a scramble for American real estate. Everyone was clamouring for greenbacks; the price of the dollar rose to new record levels. What, then, has happened since Carter's celebrated speech in January 1980, in which he announced sanctions against the Soviet union to force it to withdraw from Afghanistan? The Russians have not budged, but billions and billions of dollars have deserted Europe.

Tension needs something to feed on. Every new crisis brought in rich returns, and the credibility threshold ("This time it's serious") was set a little higher each time. There was a constant need for fresh Soviet outrages, fresh communist atrocities which could be stridently denounced whether or not Moscow's policies were in fact any better or worse than in the past. For many months, world opinion was kept on the *qui vive* by the ever-imminent and often forecast Soviet invasion of Poland, by the boycott of the Moscow Olympics, by the embargo on wheat sales to the Soviet Union.

Subsequently, it became necessary to stretch the facts a little (the so-called "Bulgarian connection" in the attempt on the Pope's life, Soviet backing for "international terrorism", and soon). Lastly, the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe and the tragic events in the Middle East have kept up the tension without which the whole lucrative operation would have been impossible. But there has been an alarming side-effect — what can only be termed the psychological preparation of the Western nations for a war against the Eastern Bloc.

Originally, the American plan certainly aimed to use the capital thus attracted across the Atlantic to finance a thoroughgoing modernisation of production facilities in the United States (while the lack of that same capital would prevent its competitors overseas from following the same course). If the Americans succeeded in re-establishing their superiority through lower industrial costs, they could then, from a postion of strength, call an end to tension. But those calculations went seriously wrong.

First, only Europe really suffered in 1979-80. Japan stood its ground. Through the extensive robotisation of its motor industry, it immediately counter struck by cornering a third of the domestic American automobile market and making similar inroads into many European markets in 1980. It also entered into a race with the United States for control of the electronics market and industrial automation. Japan became the biggest threat to the Americans.

Another unforeseen factor — and a considerable one — was Ronald Reagan's election as president. The presence of a genuine hawk in the White House was of course conducive to keeping the tension on the boil. The trouble was that Reagan used the capital attracted by the threat of war not to automate industry, but to prepare for war. But he did not rearm like Carter, who had channelled most of his military expenditure into research and the latest electronic technologies in the hope of giving American industry a shot in the arm. Reagan financed all kinds of armaments, including technologically obsolete models that the Democrats had dropped. His defence secretary examined the possibility of getting 60 per cent of the American economy working for the army. His foreign policy was designed basically to produce operational gains over the Soviet armed forces.

The aim of the White House was to create the global military conditions that would make it impossible for the Soviet Union to defend itself properly. To what end? To force the Russians, through the threat of war, into making substantial concessions? Or to invade the Russians' allies without their being able to react? Or to attack a part of Soviet territory itself while restricting to a minimum their ability to retaliate? The use that the United States could make of its military strength would depend on circumstances. The main thing was to build up that strength, in the shape of Pershing IIs, capable of wiping out the Soviet military command centres within minutes, and new space weapons that would make US territory invulnerable to nuclear attack. All this would, of course, be carried out in the name of the struggle against "the evil empire".

For a proper understanding of events, it is important to distinguish between this East-West strategy conducted by the Pentagon and the White House, and what might be alled the West-West strategy of the traditional American establishment and business circles, which still have the same goals as in 1979.

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There is increasing talk of a Third World War being "accidentally" triggered off by a technical fault in the superpowers' computerised defence systems. But is not a more serious threat posed by the possibility of the world political situation getting out of hand? The 20th century offers many examples of disasters willed by no one, but which nonetheless occurred because, in the ruthless struggle to carve up the world's wealth, one of the parties made a terrible miscalculation.

When, from about 1906 on, Britain began a rapprochement with France and Russia in order better to thwart its ever more threatening economic rival, Germany, it was thinking in terms of a short, sharp, clean war — not the destruction of Europe and nine million dead. From 1929-1933, the various ploys by the big powers involving the international shifting of capital were aimed at snatching worldwide financial hegemony and control over the economic development of the "new" countries of Eastern Europe, and certainly not intended to plunge the world into the Great Depression and bring Hitler to power.

A few years later, the idea of directing Nazi expansionism eastwards, at once to provide Germany with its Lebensraum and to scotch communism and anticolonialism, was supposed, in its originators' minds, to be a powerful factor of stability. How could they have possibly imagined that their policy would soon result in the slaughter of 49 million men, women and children? True, the sheer destructive potential of nuclear war incites governments to step warily; but caution alone can never eliminate all risk.

The two policies are in a constant state of muted incompatibility. When the former (the government) goes too far in its hostility towards Moscow, the latter (big business) — which has nothing to gain from a war with the Russians — applies the brakes (for example, a CIA report "discovers" that the "Bulgarian connection" leads nowhere). When the former wants to sell arms to the Arabs and starts seeing the Middle East as an ideal offensive base against the Soviet Union, the latter exploits local conflicts in the region so that tension can be maintained in that trouble spot, which periodically performs such a useful role in destabilising Europe and Japan. The arguments of the American business establishment, which are championed by Secretary of State, George Shultz, often end up winning the day. That establishment apparently believes itself capable of keeping control of events, while at the same time using Reagan and Caspar Weinberger as bogeymen in order to keep tension at just the right level.

But the most blatant, and as yet unresolved, divergence between the two parties concerns US policy towards Japan. In American business circles, the Japanese peril is on everyone's lips. The Business Roundtable has been pressing hard for a revaluation of the yen. IBM caught some spies from Hitachi redhanded. In the field of electronics the two countries are at daggers drawn. Yet Reagan, instead of plotting the next American attempt to destabilise the Japanese economy, remains on very good terms with Japan. This is because the Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone has publicly pledged to do two things close to Reagan's heart: first, to "bottle up" the Soviet Union's Vladivostok-based Pacific fleet in the Sea of Japan by mining the four straits through which it can reach the pacific (the Japanese would be prepared to do that in a crisis simply at Washington's request — even if Moscow did not declare war on Japanese strategic bombers flying Japanes strategic bombers flying across Japan on their way to California. As the Japanese premier put it, "Japan is the shield, and America the spear."

But would the Japanese be prepared to sacrifice their own territory in order to protect that of the United States? Of course not. On the one hand, they are relying on pressure from American big business to avoid war, so they would never be forced to commit national kamikaze as promised to Reagan. But they are also cunningly exploiting the White House's shortsighted militarism in order to set themselves up as a military power, to stimulate a certain degree of domestic growth through arms production, to enter the profitable field of arms sales, to enable themselves to guarantee, by force, the stability of the Asian region, and above all to foil undercover attempts by their American industrial competitors to influence the US government.

If all goes well, then, Japan's strategy of the last three years will be permitted to continue on its course unhindered. The fundamental aims of that strategy are: to automate everything that can be automated in Japan; to shift all other types of manufacturing to the developing countries and help them to be marketed through Japan's celebrated trading companies; and to "multinationalise" itself in Europe and the United States, not only by opening highly robotised factories so as to hold on to its existing markets, but above all by lending money on extremely advantageous terms.

Thus, international tension has not really enabled the United States to recover its position of unchallenged leadership. Japan continues to grow, while American industry is finding it hard to modernise its production facilities as quickly as it had hoped. That fact may well prompt the Americans to try to come up with another magic recipe for maintaining their supremacy over the coming years.

Even if those running the American economy succeeded in forging a strategy to counter Japan that could be reconciled with a return to East-West detente, they would have great difficulty in putting it into practice. They have been hoist by their own petard, for, as Business Week put it (27 June 1983), "a major part of the total $650,000 million of foreign investment in the United States must be regarded as shifting capital", and those holding it "may react with destabilising speed to unforseen politial or economic events."

In other words, if fear of war recedes, the dollar will fall. Like the *sorcerer's apprentice*, the Americans will be unable to spirit away the tension they have themselves conjured up.

So what will they do? First, they will look at the strong cards in their hand — the Pentagon's carefully prepared war plans, Western public opinion conditioned by the anti-communist crusade, Japan's military commitments, and the unfavourable geopolitical position of that economic rival if ever it come to the crunch.

It may reasonably be expected that the American business establishment will, in the short term at least, be able to keep any serious warmongering under control. But what if it were ever itself to opt for a military solution to its problems? It would be quite unstoppable. It would react according to the concrete situation with which it was faced. Capital flows, armaments, military plans and geopolitical realities are inescapable facts of life. But it is possible to galvanise public opinion by keeping it constantly informed. And any shift in public opinion can, in the long run, weigh in the balance. That task has been undertaken, both in the United States and in Europe, by various movements and by a large number of leading public figures. What they have in common is an awareness of the nature and scale of the real risk.

(Le Monde Diplomatique, April)

Le Monde

Directeur: Andre Laurens

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Blue-Prints

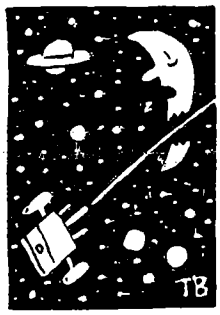
Studies, Proposals & Brainstorms

When President Reagan announced his plans for developing a ballistic missile defense (BMD) in a speech in March 1983, he suggested that it could be the means for rendering nuclear weapons obsolete. According to the president's vision, a system of protecting cities with exotic laser weapons could be developed that would frustrate an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) attack so effectively that both superpowers would eventually give up the missiles.

After this so-called "Star Wars" speech the major question became one of feasibility. Could such a total missile defense be attained?

Last autumn two panels of **government scientists** commissioned by the president to study BMD feasibility turned in words of encouragement—at least that was the administration's interpretation. As reported in *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, an interagency group, represented by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, used the two reports to stress "the importance of showing the U.S. is determined to explore and has the competence to develop the required ballistic missile defense technologies."

Despite this apparent affirmation, **R. Jeffrey Smith**, who has written a series of excellent arms control reports for *Science* magazine, found the conclusions of the reports to be less than a "hearty endorsement." According to Smith, in an April 6 *Science* article, neither study actually supports the feasibility of developing a BMD so foolproof that it would nullify the need for offensive missiles.



Smith points to the growing division of opinion about BMD among administration technical advisers. Generally speaking, those in the White House are standing behind the plan for thoroughly reliable BMD, while those in the Pentagon are falling in with Richard DeLauer, undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, who testified before the Armed Services Committee in early March that perfect BMD was unattainable. Smith told NUCLEAR TIMES that one reason Pentagon research managers are hostile to the President's BMD initiative is that by "concentrating on goals that may not be achieveable," the current plan may hurt support for any BMD.

In March the **Union of Concerned Scientists** (UCS) fueled public doubts about the Star Wars plans when it released its BMD report, "Space-Based Missile Defense." With the technical seal of approval from strategic scientists of the stature of Nobel prize-winner Hans Bethe and Richard Garwin, the report, which is highly skeptical about "perfect" BMD, drew wide news coverage. In April panel members Henry Kendall, Richard Garwin, Carl Sagan and Admiral Noel Gaylor appeared on a nationwide teleconference out of WGBH in Boston that was carried to public television stations across the country. (The study is scheduled to be published as a book this fall, coupled with the UCS antisatellite weapon study of last year.) This was followed by a report from the **Congressional Office of Technology Assessment** that described a successful BMD system as "remote."

After widespread publicity about the technical problems of achieving total population protection with BMD, administration officials no longer stress the angle of making nuclear weapons obsolete. (Although the so-called Star Wars "czar," Lieutenant General James Abrahamson, coordinator of Reagan's BMD programs, maintains a bullish front.) Now BMD is more often portrayed as way of bolstering the U.S. deterrent—the addition of another layer of uncertainty to calculations of Soviet strategic planners.

As such, BMD is conceived as part of a mix of offensive and defensive systems. In his *Science* article, Smith points that just such a mix was expressly disavowed by the president in his March 1983 speech. "If paired with offensive systems," Reagan said, "they [BMD] can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy, and no one wants that." But that seems to be how BMD plans are shaping up.

In his book *Arming The Heavens*, published in April, **Jack Manno** raises the possibility that "the leading proponents of space ABMs understand their scheme lacks substance. They merely find the language of defense effective rhetoric for mobilizing popular support behind their real aim—initiating an *offensive* arms race in space."

In a chapter in the Brookings Institution's recently published book, edited by Ashton Carter and David Schwartz, *Ballistic Missile Defense*, **Leon Sloss**, a national security specialist, discusses the role of BMD in a variety of strategies. In a minimal deterrence strategy, for instance, he sees no role. But when coupled with an emphasis on offensive weapons (as currently seems to be the drift in strategic planning), BMD, according to Sloss, figures squarely in the equation of a warfighting strategy. **—Corinna Gardner**

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM BLOOM

The following two articles are reprinted by permission of the editor, Global Pages, a bimonthly publication focusing on education for peace, justice and global understanding, published by Immaculate Heart College Center, 10951 W. Pico Blvd., #2021, L.A., 90064 (gratis):

Revolt of the Second Grade

Second grade students at liberal-minded Oakwood Elementary School didn't like dictatorship. And they made sure teacher Ellen Brock knew.

As part of a year-long simulation called the City Building Educational Program, these 24 youngsters were learning about urban planning and city organization by building a town, replete with cardboard houses, minature airport and a seven-year old mayor. The program has been successfully used throughout Los Angeles public and private schools over the last ten years.

It was Ellen Brock's first time.

Because of her own personal interest in environmental and political issues, the class experience highlighted ecology and government. Students, for example, adopted a tree in their simulated city. They would sit by its trunk underneath magnificent paper branches and write poetry. Their appreciation of nature prompted the class to raise money for the Tree People, an environmental group dedicated to reforesting the depleted tree population.

Their appreciation of freedom also led these second graders to action.

As part of the City Building Program's government component, students establish an organizational structure to regulate and coordinate the building of their urban environment. Brock decided this would be a good opportunity to introduce these youngsters to the rudiments of democracy and dictatorship.

Using a stemer voice, demanding quiet in the classroom and assigning tasks with no avenue for redress, Brock simulated dictatorial power over her young city-builders. They were to have no participatory role in the city's development. Her decisions were to be final. "The kids were totally taken aback by what was going on," recalls Brock. "Some even started to cry and left the room." And so, these little ones learned that dictatorship was not fun.

At the end of the class period, students were told to wear blue the following day and bring something to the simulated city to make it a better place.

"That night I was a nervous wreck," says Brock. "The kids had responded so dramatically to it, I was afraid I had gone too far." Although real-life dictatorships don't limit the boundaries of their inhumanity, Brock, burdened by guilt, proceeded to buy donuts for her suffering subjects, to be distributed the next day after the lesson had been learned. Little did Brock know it was she who was going to learn the lesson.

The next day, all the children came to school wearing clothes of their assigned color, took their seats obediently and waited for another frightening experience with their stern and unbending teacher. Going around the room, each child explained what he/she had brought—be it a flower or a little picture—and why. One student, whose offering was in his locker, proceeded to walk over to that corner of the room. Other students followed. They all returned carrying signs reading "Down With Dictatorship." "I began to cry," recalls Brock. "Just think of 24 second-graders carrying little picket signs. I gave them their donuts."

Brock discovered later that the kids had all called each other the night before and hatched the protest plan. When she asked the children what they didn't like about her regime, the students answered in terms of what restriction of freedom means to seven-year olds. "We want to be able to make our own choices," said some. "We didn't like you being so mean," replied others.

Clearly, these child-like criticisms are symbolic, although unsophisticated, articulations of adult protests. None of us like to be treated inhumanely. We all want fulfillment of our basic needs. We all demand the inalienability of our fundamental freedoms.

Today, although four years later, these children, now sixth graders, see Brock in the school yard and recall their experience with dictatorship—and their effective protest against repression. Lesson learned.

Laurien Alexandre

When Simulation Isn't

This is a story about metamorphosis. It is a tale that weaves through multiple levels of reality—a place where simulation exercises are not games, where educators are dictators, and where comfortable American high school students fall victim to tyranny. It is about transcending cultural distance and honoring experience as the most powerful of all teachers.

The setting is the beautiful campus of Alverno High School, a private girl's institution nestled quietly in the foothills of traditionally conservative Sierra Madre. The scene opens in the upper-division International Relations class of instructor Steve Bailey. Juniors and seniors are uncomfortably struggling with a college text's difficult and tedious terminology. Chapter Two's lesson on the global interaction of nations is passing them by. Bailey's frustration inspires him to search for a way to break through his students' intimidation of the text.

Bailey decides to simulate the world theater by dividing students into small groups of five—each group representing factions within a Third World country (the class). As Bailey tours the room, he is pleased to notice that most factions are seriously considering their national standing and discussing values. But one group is openly hostile, vowing to defy the national interests and Bailey's authority.

That was the innocent beginning of a simulation which changed the character of the class for two weeks and became an experience which few of its participants are likely to forget. Nor should they. For through the activity, extreme as it was, students gained a lesson stronger than any text or lecture could have taught them—an identification with the victims of oppression and an intense disdain for the denial of rights and freedoms.

That night after class, Bailey developed a more expansive idea for the simulation. The following class meeting, he strode into the room and told the students that he was assuming control as a benevolent dictator. His subjects were then ordered to obediently follow newly instituted rules: all students were to sit straight and fold their hands; bathroom privileges were revoked; permission was to be granted to speak; and the highest grade anyone could receive would be a "C" because, according to the ruler, the masses are only average. These regulations would stay in effect until the students 'did something' to make him change his mind.

At first students laughed. The game seemed like fun and was a diversion from the difficult text. They analyzed the game's players with interest: Bailey was the dictator and they were his subjects; other students were minipowers, teachers and parents were major powers, and the administration was the superpower.

The students had to consider their resources and their best strategy. To the outside observer, it would be obvious that sheer numbers was their greatest asset, but that was least available because the class members were so divided. Some students wanted to ignore the game, feeling it was "stupid" and choosing to remain neutral. Others wanted to overthrow the self-appointed ruler and planned acts of revenge. Still others seriously considered ways to work through this newly imposed system.

The experience became quite unsettling after a few days. Students complained that their lessons were suffering because they couldn't learn under such oppressive conditions. In this sense, the classroom reality matched that of the real world. Under dictatorships, education is stifled and few people have the opportunity to learn. Students also didn't seem to know what to expect. Hoping that each new class meeting would bring them once again, face-to-face with their kindly instructor, their optimism faltered under daily encounters with their formidable adversary. According to Bailey's paradigm, this emotional state was also realistic, for when real dictators assumer power, there is despair and mass confusion.

Speaking of the confusion, Alverno's principal, Dr. Elizabeth Broome, rooted its cause in the nature of the experience itself. "It was supposed to be a simulation," she says, "but Steve Bailey was really *doing* it. It was not a simulation because simulation is a metaphor. There was no 'like' or 'as', Bailey was actually 'being.'" Without metaphorical distance, the simulation quickly became real life. The classroom became a totalitarian regime, the students became victims of an oppressive system, and life on this quiet campus was drastically changed for the duration of the activity.

Reactions differed among the various participant groups. Some students initially tried pleading with the less-than-benovolent ruler, stressing that the game wasn't fair. Particularly unjust, they felt, were restrictions on bathroom use and classroom sitting positions. But Bailey

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was unmoved by moral arguments. "Dictators don't respond to fairness," he said.

Several other students, independent of their peers' consent, circulated a petition among faculty urging relinquishment of the oppressive policies instituted in the classroom. While the dictator considered the signatures noteworthy, since they were only from major powers, the petition lacked the force of an obligatory mandate. "You have got to get a power stronger than myself to control me," he told the masses. But, bowing to 'international pressure', Bailey did concede to lift certain minimal restrictions. This apparent benevolence also carried a deeper lesson about real world politics, for dictators often parcel out reforms to keep opposition at bay and engender favorable international opinion. Bailey was acting much like a player on the world's theater.

Teachers had mixed responses to the activity. Some felt Bailey's experiment was admirable and watched its daily unfolding eagerly. Others felt he had gone too far. They considered the simulation disruptive and inhumane. Still others worried that it would become a schoolwide issue which would cut into their own classrooms, or in the simulation's paradigm, Bailey's national struggle would interfere with the internal matters of other sovereign states.

Bailey tried to keep the subversion from spreading. When students in his AP English class staged a sympathy boycott in support of their International Relations comrades, they learned the hard way that first period's country was not second period's classroom. Bailey gave them tardy notices and advised them not to equate similarities between leaders (no matter how much they looked alike), for one runs the risk of formulating a national policy based on incorrect premises and stereotyped assumptions.

Parents expressed concern about their childrens' tales of woe exchanged over the dinner table. Of the four phone calls Bailey received from parents, three wanted to understand the nature and intent of the lesson and expressed concern about attitudes the kids might develop towards Bailey even when the activity ended . . . and when would that be? The other lone parent called, and before slamming down the receiver, accused Bailey of being a communist undermining traditional education.

The school's administration supported Bailey's effort to bring home an understanding of oppression and a disdain for violations of human rights. "I've been yelling about simulations for years," says principal Broome. "This isn't exactly the smooth kind I had imagined, but I trust Steve. I think the lesson of this simulation was for students to experience overt oppression. It is real hard to have empathy with people anywhere—El Salvador or even within the United States. Educationally, at the level of high school students cognitive development, these kids have to have a powerful experience in order to feel something real." Although she did have some moments of doubt, especially at the initial stages, once Broome figured out the 'game plan' she felt comfortable to let it take its own course.

The dictator had his doubts too. Bailey recalls feeling paranoid at times. 'Terrorist' attacks had begun. Chocolate pudding was smeared on the classroom door. Messages were left on his home answering machine. And unsigned notes were placed on his car windshield. "I was beginning to get a little paranoid," remembers Bailey, "but that is something which every real life dictator also runs into." Bailey's emotions were feeling the strain of being greeted each morning with 30 sets of hateful stares. "It set the tone for the entire day. I would be irritable at school and depressed at night," recalls Bailey. "My feeling of wanting to carry this thing to the hilt until they did something to break the dictatorship battled my strong temptation to relieve myself and my students of the mental strain."

Bailey spent hours pondering the validity of the activity as an educational experience. Afraid that students were unable to make the cognitive leap necessary to apply textbook lessons to their newly imposed life situation, Bailey came to class one day not as the dictator, but as a substitute—himself. Discussing with the students the nature of dictatorships and the ways in which groups develop alliances with other powers, Bailey hinted strongly that they should seek unity with the superpower. That, he said, was a force that the dictator would listen to.

Finally, after more than a week of endurance, one of the brighter students, who had previously chosen to remain 'neutral', took leadership, challenged the disunity of her peers, and organized a small contingent to meet with the principal. Behind closed-door negotiations, a treaty was written which mandated a retroactive grade change, a cessation of all unreasonable classroom activities, and revoking all disciplinary notices handed out during the dictatorship. The treaty was based on the power model used in the international relations lesson plan.

Broome, who helped draft the treaty, refused to sign the document with the students, claiming that "a superpower, like the United States, would never sign a treaty with a small guerrilla force, but only with a head of state." She accompanied the students to class the following day, and ultimately signed the agreement with the ruler. The students felt victorious. Bailey felt relieved. The simulation, whose development had taken a life of its own, was now over.

How does one evaluate such an experience?

Clearly, the simulation has its weaknesses. One might question the efficacy of such a time-consuming classroom activity. One might wonder about the morality of forcing students to endure such hardships. Others might question the nature of the activity's design, for it was Bailey, the dictator, who set the terms of acceptable resolution. Restricting this to a treaty with the superpowers ignores the fact that, in real life, many independence movements have remained non-aligned, choosing a path free from superpower attachments. Also, because the only acceptable resolution involved the superpower asserting its strength over the other major power, by implication, students might come to believe that superpowers, such as the United States, have the force and inalienable right to manipulate sovereign states as it sees fit. These issues cannot be overlooked when evaluating such an activity for classroom use.

But ultimately, the judgement must rest on the impact such an activity has had on the students. It would be ludicrous to ask students if they liked the experience, for whom among us enjoys the denial of rights and freedoms. So too, asking them for a sustained critique would be relatively fruitless, for their level of cognitive development and their emotional involvement would make such objective reflection difficult. Perhaps the best way to answer our question is to look at two subsequent events.

Several weeks after the activity, a holocaust survivor came to Alverno. The International Relations students were especially attentive and responsive to her story of degradation and oppression. After the presentation, one young student approached the guest speaker and, with big tears swelling in her eyes, told the woman that hearing the holocaust story stimulated feelings she herself had experienced during a classroom encounter with dictatorship. They hugged. Empathy is a powerful lesson.

Finally, during a class discussion several weeks after the simulation, one student blithely stated that she simply didn't understand how such-and-such people could have allowed a dictator to take power. Her classmates sighed in dismay. Then she smiled and remembered. Experience is the most powerful teacher of all.

Laurien Alexandre

Let God Be God

I DO NOT TALK about theology much these days. It seems to me that theology is something to experience or even to do rather than something to talk about or legislate on. Thus I was relieved when the Senate finally got around to letting the proposed constitutional amendment on prayer in the public schools die for lack of sufficient support.

I do not share the feeling of the President that God has been excluded from the schools by this legislative act. If God were the kind of being who could be thrown out of a public school by a legislative decision, I should be very disappointed in God.

We have in our country made education not only a right but an obligation for every person. If you are going to give people power to control their own destinies, they must have education.

But belief in God and prayer are different matters. For one thing, belief cannot be compelled any more than prayer can. A basic lesson of religion is that it is idle to try; not only is it idle, it is counter-productive. You may get compliance that way or even a kind of memorized, repetitive faith, but you will not get authentic, intrinsic religion.

A lot depends on who, what, and where you think God is. If you think God is encapsulated in a creed or an ancient book or a particular kind of prayer, perhaps you can help people find God by making them memorize and repeat certain words.

If you think God is somebody out there who is running things according to a divine plan known only to God and the chosen few, perhaps you can describe the plan to people in such a way that they will respond to it.

But I am haunted by the suspicion that all the divine plans that have been revealed and transmitted word for word to the faithful have been the creations of what some people felt God ought to say or think or write or command. There have been so many revelations and divine plans and programs that they cannot possibly all be true and authentic. And it doesn't help to say, "My revelation is true while all others are false."

This was the truth our founding fathers saw when they said with simple eloquence, "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or the free exercise thereof." No law can confine God, no formula express God totally. Hence, let everybody be free to search out God, to express convictions freely, to share ideas with others, to worship or not to worship as seems fit. But let nobody, including the state, try to impose religious beliefs on others. Everybody is free to believe (or not to believe); nobody is free to impose belief on others. The principle is so simple, so profound.

We must have laws, customs, but we have to find our way for ourselves, listening to the experience of others, but in the end relying on our own insights and our own consciences.

It is admittedly a risky business. We run the chance of being wrong in our choices and insights. But we also have the chance of being right now and then, of seeing some truth, some vision of reality, some natural or human possibility never dreamed of before. And that is how we have groped, stumbled, plodded, and climbed our way to where we are now: not at the culmination of all knowledge and truth, but at their very beginning. We should not meddle with that possibility. It is the most hopeful thing about the human race. We can be stupid, blind, cruel, and wicked. But we can learn, we can grow, we can create new ways of life. No church or state should get in the way of that process.

"The great act of faith," wrote Justice Holmes, "is when a man decides that he is not God."

HARRY C. MESERVE

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Aftermath, HIROSHIMA, August 6, 1945:

"Of the 45 hospitals, only 3 remained standing. Of the 298 doctors, 270 were killed. Of the 1,780 nurses, 1,645 were killed."

—*Quoted from "Ethical Imagination and Disarmament", by Peter Abbs, Teachers College Record, Fall, 1982, p. 180.*

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