

8. The fact that the United States has been prepared to use the threat of nuclear retaliation to deter the threat of Communist attacks, other than the threat of an outright attack against the security of the United States and its allies, has posed difficult questions affecting the relationship of the United States with its allies generally and with Canada in particular.

9. Mr. Dulles' speech on massive retaliation in January of last year is a case in point. The Secretary of State for External Affairs, in commenting on this speech in the House of Commons on March 25, did not question the proposition that the capacity to retaliate with nuclear weapons could be a valuable deterrent against aggression, but he sought clarification at the same time on the applicability of this strategy to various forms of Communist threat and on the manner in which decisions would be made, i.e., with or without prior consultation with the allies.

10. The danger of this doctrine was that it appeared to assume that the other side either could not or would not retaliate with nuclear weapons, an assumption which is invalid, at least in so far as the capability of the Soviet Union is concerned. Thus, in trying to restrain any form of military action on the Communist side by the threat of all-out attack, such threats of "massive" nuclear attack run the risk that if the Soviet Union intervenes, hostilities which begin as a local or limited war might turn into a thermonuclear one. There is also the danger that this type of threat risks becoming a boomerang as Soviet nuclear capability grows. For it cannot be overlooked that the Soviet Union (and Communist China) may likewise exploit the threat of nuclear retaliation in weakening the will of the Western Powers to risk war in the protection of their essential interests.

11. Considerations such as these have evidently been taken into account in Washington, for "massive" retaliation has given place to "measured" retaliation. The idea now seems to be that instead of threatening the use of the full force of nuclear destructive power to deter local Communist military threats where vital allied interests are not involved, the United States threatens the use of nuclear weapons of a limited destructive nuclear power and only in a tactical role against military targets. This change is based not only on considerations of policy, but also on the fact that the United States has developed a variety of nuclear weapons ranging from a destructive power of the equivalent of 500 tons of TNT, upwards to the equivalent of a million tons and more.

12. The possibility that this concept of "measured retaliation" might be applied in Asia was brought out by Mr. Dulles in reporting on the military arrangements of the Manila Treaty on March 8. He said that the allies now possess plenty of power in this treaty area and that this power includes sea and air forces equipped with "new and powerful weapons of precision which can utterly destroy military targets without endangering unrelated civilian centres". The President, in backing Mr. Dulles up, gave the impression that these smaller nuclear weapons could be used like conventional weapons. "On strictly military targets and for strictly military purposes, I see no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would use a bullet or anything else", he said.

13. The question of whether a valid military distinction can be drawn between large and small nuclear weapons can probably be answered only by competent experts on the basis of full technical data. So far, the United States has not made available to its allies the necessary data and it is, therefore, difficult to offer a firm opinion on the validity of the distinction which the U.S. authorities have sought to draw. But whatever may be the difficulty of defining the military problem in the absence of the necessary facts, it can be assumed that our main aim is to seek an effective political control over the putting into effect of any plans or preparations for nuclear warfare.