

been rather perverse. The first-use doctrine of NATO caused the Warsaw Pact to develop methods of fighting in a nuclear environment: they put men into armoured personnel carriers and worked out tactics for going hurriedly through irradiated areas, all of which made their forces look more mobile and menacing to NATO and seemed to confirm the need for the first-use doctrine to match the apparent threat. The fundamental problem, however, is that to rely on mobile armoured warfare to keep the peace — in Europe or anywhere else — is a strategy that is inherently unstable, in three ways.

First, there is crisis instability. The high premium on surprise attack means that in a crisis there is a temptation to attack before the other side attacks you, i.e., to carry out a pre-emptive strike. Knowledge that your opponent fears that you will attack him first, just as you fear that he will attack you first, intensifies the pressure to attack pre-emptively. That fear and pressure will be more intense the more each side has deployed vulnerable offensive forces that offer rich targets—for example, exposed aircraft on airfields or concentrations of tanks or other tracked or wheeled vehicles.

Second, there is escalation instability. If the strategy is to pursue decisive battle in a war of manoeuvre, the consequence is to maximize the probability that one side or other will be decisively defeated at the non-nuclear level and find that it must escalate to the use of nuclear weapons — or surrender.

Third, the more armed forces have an offensive capability the more it is necessary for each side to pursue a build-up in arms so as to keep matching the threatening arms of the other side. That is what generates an arms race.

Apart from these military consequences of possessing forces with a strong offensive capability, there are important political consequences. The sight of forces with an offensive capability will arouse fear, suspicion and hostility in the mind of your potential adversary. If your political aims are peaceful, it is a mistake to follow a strategy that induces hostility in your neighbour; it is more sensible to seek to reassure him by creating, if you can, the ability to defend yourself without creating the ability to attack him.

DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

Could the strategies of either or both sides in Europe be made more defensive? In other words, is it possible to vary the strategy and nature of the non-nuclear forces in such a way as to vary their defensive capability relative to their offensive capability, and vice versa?

That there is scope for variation — though we cannot say precisely how much — is evident from the fact that we identify the strategy and forces of the Warsaw Treaty

Organization as being offensive; and we identify the strategy and forces of many of the neutral countries — for example, Switzerland or Yugoslavia — as being defensive, designed to ensure that if anyone attacked them they would get bogged down in a war of attrition. Further, it is clear that some weapons and some types of forces are more offensive than others.

The assessment of whether and how far the strategy and forces of a country have an offensive or a defensive capability is not just a matter, however, of trying to label weapons—though some weapons can be picked out as being items without which the armed forces of a nation or alliance would have little or no ability to attack. Rather it is a matter of judging the strategy and character of the forces of a country as a whole — their doctrine, training, equipment, weapons, deployment, logistics and everything else. That is what we do when we apply the label 'defensive' to the doctrine and forces of some neutral countries, and the label 'offensive' when we look at the doctrine and forces of the Warsaw Pact.

The main work that has been done on the technical possibilities of non-offensive defence has concentrated on land warfare, and has been concerned with the design of defensive belts of dispersed forces and the use of new kinds of weapons within these belts. An important question is to what extent you still need mobile armoured forces to engage the enemy where he makes progress through the defensive belt and to provide a capacity for counter-attack.⁴

This work has focused on the question of how far you could construct defensive forces which, while possessing limited offensive capability, would be able to hold an enemy and bog him down in a war of attrition, thus dissuading him from attack. The work has been done in the West — though, for all we know, similar work may have been going on in the East. It was usually based on the assumption, noted earlier, that a change towards non-offensive defence would be made by NATO alone. This was partly a point of logic — it made sense to explore how effective defences could be made against an uncooperative opponent; and it was partly a matter of political realism — there seemed little chance of a change being started by the Warsaw Pact. But since NATO was the weaker side with the less offensive posture, it was a tough case to argue. A few heretics within the military and ex-military in West Germany and other countries backed the idea, but the NATO military establishment dismissed as 'pie-in-the-sky' the notion that the one-sided adoption of non-offensive defence was consistent with the security of NATO. Since the military have a predilection for the offensive, their opposition was probably exaggerated; but whether well or ill-founded, the argument about the one-sided adoption of non-offensive defence ceases to have much