

We should certainly keep on trying in every possible and honourable way to do this but we should not expect any easy way out of existing difficulties or become unduly impatient or frustrated if the various moves that we make fail and we are rebuffed. It will be tempting to react to a rebuff by a tough and provocative retaliation. It is a temptation that must be resisted. There is something to be said in diplomacy for the velvet glove over the iron hand. There is nothing to be said for the iron glove over the velvet hand. It seems to me, therefore, that we would be wise, all of us, to adjust ourselves to the probability of the tensions and manoeuvrings of the present continuing for some time, and not to count on any magic formula to bring about a quick and general settlement. Our best course is to accept realistically the general over-all situation as it is, for purposes of policy and diplomacy, to get steadily stronger to meet its challenges, and keep on attempting to solve specific problems as opportunity offers, without undue elation when we succeed, or undue despair when we fail, which will, I fear, be our more common experience. In this way, the free world, while getting stronger militarily, will get stronger also in morale and staying power; and that is what is going to conquer in the end. One of the most experienced students of warfare now living, Captain Liddell Hart, expressed this view in an article not long ago, which included the following paragraphs:

"The study of war has taught me that almost every war was avoidable, and that the outbreak was most often produced by statesmen losing their heads, or their patience, and putting their opponent in a position where he could not draw back without serious loss of "face". Clumsy efforts to forestall a feared aggression have too often provoked it - particularly where politically-inspired moves have jumped beyond strategic possibilities.....

"But the best safeguard of all is for all of us to keep cool. Indignation and exasperation are primary risks, for such emotions are all too likely to produce a fatal explosion. Nothing can be more fatal than the feeling, "it's bound to come - let's get it over". War is not a way out from danger and strain. It's a way down into a pit of unknown depth.

"On the other hand, tension so intense as now is almost bound to relax eventually if war is postponed long enough. This has happened often before in history, for situations change. They never remain static. But it is always dangerous to be too dynamic, and impatient, in trying to force the pace. A war-charged situation can only change in two ways. It is bound to become better, eventually, if war is avoided without surrender".

It will be easier to apply these principles, if we do not forget that the military strength we are collecting in our North Atlantic coalition is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end; the establishment of security by the negotiation of settlements. In other words, we are determined to use our strength solely for peace. If we use it for war, it will be because war was forced on us and we had no other course.

In working out policies, based on these principles, the North Atlantic coalition is today our main agency. In