

so far reduced as to minimize the temptation to make use of hidden stocks for a surprise attack; moreover, each side would suspect that the other would have retained secretly at least some capacity to retaliate in kind, so that the deterrent would continue to operate, with far less international tension to induce an explosion;

(e) looking at the record of disarmament negotiations since 1946 as impartially as possible, there seems to have been some progress, at least in words, and probably in substance. The gap, though still immense, has been narrowed, no doubt because neither side could afford to ignore the strength of public opinion on this issue.

63. Looking to the probable resumption of talks on disarmament in the United Nations, it would help to regain some momentum if other powers were to join the United States in trying to work out a genuine new approach to disarmament in the light of the new assumptions of the nuclear age. Among possible directions which such a re-examination might explore are:

(a) lowering our safeguards as part of a comprehensive disarmament programme, since "security" these days is a highly relative term, with or without disarmament, with the emphasis on the need for warning of a surprise attack and preparations for aggression;

(b) the possibility of banning further test explosions of thermonuclear weapons;

(c) the possibility of relating disarmament to the other main roots of international tension, such as the rearming of Germany and Japan, on the principle that it would be unnecessary to proceed very far along this road if, by means of a disarmament agreement, some reduction in the levels of forces of all major countries could actually be achieved.

Desire for a Détente

64. From the arguments in the foregoing sections, it may be deduced, that so long as the Western Alliance remains united and maintains its nuclear and other military capabilities, the risks involved in starting a war and the probable devastating consequences should a nuclear war develop, would probably discourage the Soviet Union, or any other power, undertaking war as a deliberate act of policy.

65. The circumstances in which the Soviet Union would be the most likely to decide to go to war, would be if it became convinced beyond a reasonable possibility of doubt that the Western Powers intended to attack it. It might then decide to strike first as a forestalling or preventative measure.

66. The risk of war through such miscalculation, therefore, remains despite the nuclear deterrent, because the Soviet Union might believe that a threat existed, when in fact it did not. For this reason it is essential that allied peaceful and defensive intentions should not only be apparent at all times, but should be communicated to the Soviet Union and its ally, Communist China, in such a way as there should be no possible grounds for misunderstanding allied intentions.

67. It is in these circumstances, therefore, that efforts to reach a détente, or a cessation of strained relations between the Communist and non-Communist groups of powers, assume such importance in allied policy. The establishment of normal diplomatic negotiations for the settlement of outstanding issues and the cessation of political and economic warfare is an essential means of avoiding the kind of misunderstanding which could conceivably lead to war despite the nuclear deterrent.

68. Consideration might, therefore, be given to the establishment of some form of continuing Four Power diplomatic machinery arising out of the Geneva talks, so that regular diplomatic contact between Foreign Ministers to deal primarily with security problems between the Big Powers should not again be broken off.