

stake, a sentiment which was echoed by another American Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, some 30 years later.

Yet, at that time, when Herter made this remark which cast so much doubt on the reliability of the American nuclear umbrella, the United States had literally 20 times as many nuclear weapons as the Soviet Union.

Let me now run very quickly over the situation since 1960. Both sides have presided over enormous increases in their nuclear armouries, especially in the 10 years between 1970 and 1979, during which the United States increased the number of its warheads from 4,000 to 10,000, and the Soviet Union increased the number of its warheads from only 1,800 to 6,000. As I speak to you now, so far as I know, in 1985, the United States has some 11,000 strategic nuclear warheads against 9,000 nuclear warheads in the Soviet Union. Nobody who is directly concerned with the problem denies today that the United States and the Soviet Union have effective nuclear parity. I was at a meeting two years ago, attended by Richard Perle, in which even he accepted that there was nuclear parity between the superpowers.

Yet the arms race in the nuclear field is still continuing. In fact, by 1990, unless something is done, Russia and the United States will each have 13,000 nuclear weapons, providing they observe the provisions of the SALT II Treaty which the United States has not yet ratified. If the provisions of SALT II are ignored by the superpowers, both sides will have about 20,000 nuclear warheads each.

A question which people have been asking increasingly over the last 20 years — Churchill first asked it — is: What is the point of acquiring weapons which will simply make the rubble bounce a little bit higher if there is a nuclear war?

I think the answer to that question, which has perplexed many ordinary, sensible people is this: on both sides there has been a shift from using nuclear weapons simply to deter the outbreak of war, to thinking in terms of nuclear weapons as a means of fighting a war. Indeed, the United States Administration has adopted a strategic directive which requires it to “prevail” in the case of nuclear war.

This possibility has appeared open to governments for two reasons. First of all, it is now possible, because people on the Western side were not sensible enough to ban MIRVs during the SALT I negotiations in the late sixties, to pack a lot of warheads into a single