



by Bradley Warner

Eayrs on Armament

"How much can we overkill a country"? James Eayrs asked 40 Political Scientists.

March 25th, Eayrs conducted a Friday afternoon Colloquium for staff and student members of the Political Science Department. An expert in the field of International Relations, he spoke on **World Armament**.

As a Killam guest lecturer for the evening, Professor Eayrs was invited to give impromptu another presentation on a topic of his own choosing. The choice was a theme which has become a private hobby of his: "the actors, attitudes and decisions which have influenced the course of re-armament amongst major World Powers in the post-Second World War era". He dealt with the shift from the creation and utilization of 'ponderable' (non-nuclear) weaponry and warfare to the new technology which has fabricated, stockpiled, but not deployed 'overkill' nuclear tactical machinery in an era of so-called peace.

There is a 'need to know' situation on how to control the consequences of the past 'arms race'. Also more nations are acquiring nuclear technology and displaying aggressive instability. This point is high on the agenda of World business.

Will the spirit of common sense prevail? In this 'soul searching' there are potentially uncontrollable variables. The politicians and the military, decision-makers whose demands for weapons development continue to be expensive in terms of human resources.

Recall the old ponderables. Eayrs recounted to his audience about his own naval experience in the Second World War aboard an antiquated wooden-hulled minesweeper, the Comox. The ship's use as a weapon was easily fathomable; its place in the scheme of things was concrete and directional. The old Comox never caught a mine, was not threatened by the enemy, and merely patrolled the approach routes to Halifax Harbour. In fact, the business of this weapon was so uniform that it received the affectionate nickname, "the old 5 o'clock" because her skipper was able to return his crew dockside almost daily for tea.

In a more serious vein, Eayrs discussed arms technology and international diplomacy; which throw a host of unknowns at the feet of the decision makers. Use of available modern arms pyrric in winning arguments. They might cost more than a country should be willing to spend and prove hard to control in the long run. Modern armaments are still "tools to inflict pain, unconviviality" in the senseless manner of deterring confrontations.

We are constantly behind in understanding the scope of weapons technology. Stockpiling continues, of increasing array of 'tools' of which the majority of military and political actors are ignorant. Another complication is that weapons production is expensive in terms of time and resources. The lead time between the ordering of new armament, their production, and delivery has become longer. Often by the time a 'modern' system becomes fully operational, they are no longer required for use as a diplomatic deterrent; they are surpassed by arms technology again so that they are obsolete.

Two ideas emerge: Arms technology continues to produce evermore sophisticated weapons while continuing to manufacture older machinery which has been proven useless as strategic or tactical tools. Whereas, armament used to be a major strength in conducting diplomacy, now communication generally takes place long before they can be produced and made fully operational.

Eayrs then returns to the attitudes of the main actors in international relations, their cadre, and other concerned interests. Recent developments in arms technology, include weapon which can be operated by a few men to wipe out a tank corps with 50% accuracy-Precision-guided Weapons. This makes the tank obsolete. Who needs tanks when 'P.G.W.'s are around and who is presently shopping around for these obsolete toys? Answer: Canada, in order to fulfil part of its NATO commitment. Canada in the 1950's also dabbled in the construction of deterrent jet aircraft, the CF105 Arrow Starfighter. The program was cancelled in 1959 and replaced with the BOMARC missile system which has now been phased out by the Canadian government.

Another case of futility is the U.S. controversy over the construction of nuclear-powered carriers and cruisers which have also been made redundant in tactical warfare. The Carrier Admirals have been lobbying for a new improved fleet of these. President Ford has also thrown his support behind their requests (demands?), since the U.S.S.R. navy outnumbers the United States in size and new equipment. But the costs are astronomical and the life expectancy of an atom-carrier or cruiser in wartime conditions would be low. Supposedly the cruiser would protect the carrier-- which itself 'carries' a protective complement of 'ammunition' and fighter planes. The cruiser will also carry a complement of fighters--not just to protect the carrier, but for its own protection. In addition there are built-in spiral costs of constructing the fleet and it would have to be in the field continuously at great expense.

Overkill

Such are the policies of the leader from the heart of U.S. isolationism, Grand Rapids Michigan. Paradoxically in 1975, President Ford cancelled the ABM system initially advocated by his predecessor because after Nixon "broke sharks fin" with Mao, such a deterrent was no longer a necessary adjunct of U.S./China foreign policy.

Why then, the request for new weapons? In effect, this would put the U.S. in the position of acting like a "global policeman": a new American foreign policy reminiscent of Pax Britannica. But Henry Kissinger, present U.S. Secretary of State has officially denied such a motive four times. Pax Americana would be a natural end result of rearmament whatever dogmatic protestations may be offered.

"The final imponderable", says Eayrs, "is the decision maker. He is useless, pitiful, 'a nightingale without a song'." The escape route for this person is limited. Opera-

tional experience is hard to gain--history books, an artificial test in staged 'wargames'--what else is there. "Give a word of sympathy for the decision makers".

Or we could take the Danish solution--a diplomatic joke--"Scrap the armed forces, install an answering service with a single message in Russian: WE SURRENDER!"

However, the "momentum of technology takes over" as was elicited from the discussion. Our 'tools of destruction' have become more sophisticated but operationally simple and easily deployed. Nevertheless arms development continues oblivious to the so-called decision makers. The targeters and strategists construct scenarios but hopefully will never have to act them out.

The concluding thought presented to the audience is one commonly held, that 'the quality of life' is a 'ponderable' which is utterly more desirable than the topic under discussion. So it is.

Torture, terror, and the Church

I am an officer of the Uruguayan army. If I have come to the decision, for me a very important one, to write this letter, it is for one reason, and one reason only: the revulsion I feel for all that I have the misery of witnessing, and worse still, in some cases, of taking part in. It has become intolerable for me. everything that I considered fundamental, my family, my career, to which I dedicated the best years of my life, my country, the country of my parents and grandparents, I now see changed and in a new light, faced with this growing and intolerable repugnance.

I know that I am taking a great risk, and that for some of my fellow officers this will be treason, but nobody can ask me to forget my Christian faith, my respect for the human being.

The Uruguayan armed forces systematically torture and maltreat political or trade union detainees. I have hundreds of proofs, from my own painful personal experience.

There are many variants of torture and of disgusting names: the "submarine" (*el submarino*) (near-suffocation by immersion in basins of water, or with a nylon bag, or a combination of both forms); I know of several cases of death, including young people. The hooding of all prisoners for an indefinite period; the interminable periods that detainees, male and female, have to spend standing, naked, suffering severe beatings, and forced to carry out their physiological needs still standing.

There are many variants of the use of electricity. The electric prod (*la picana*) applied to the limits of resistance (I have seen prisoners with serious inflammation and infection of the prostate and testicles). The "telephone" (*el telefono*) is the application of a cable to each earlobe. I have seen the strongest officers and non-commissioned officers selected to punish prisoners, with clubs, pipes, karate blows. And I can state that no one is safe from this treatment; some cases are more brutal than others, but practically all prisoners, irrespective of age or sex, are beaten and tortured. Dozens of prisoners, have been taken to the Military Hospital with fractures and lesions. Such a level of sadism has been

reached that military doctors supervise the torture.

The women are a separate category: the officers, non-commissioned officers and the troops greet the arrival of young women detainees with delight. Some even come in to take part in interrogations on their days off. I have personally witnessed the worst aberrations committed with women, in front of other prisoners, by many interrogators. Many of the women prisoners are only held for the purpose of discovering the whereabouts of their husband, father or son, that is, they themselves have been accused of nothing.

I could continue, but I suppose that to provoke the same disgust that I feel, this is sufficient. This treatment of detainees, I know for sure, is practised almost everywhere, including in private houses 'expropriated' for the purpose. One of these is situated on the *rambla* ("sea drive") O'Higgins 5515, and the neighbours can bear witness to the piercing screams of the tortured, in spite of the music being played at full volume. Torture is used in practically all military barracks, although some are outstanding for their brutality. Nor is it only the army that tortures; the police, the navy and the air force torture as much, and worse. The raids are also part of the barbarity. I have seen them pillaging houses like savages, breaking what is left, fighting over a television or a sheepskin coat. And this they do under the pretext of depriving communists of their bases of support.

In the beginning, interrogations were carried out by intelligence personnel, but for some time now we have all been obliged to participate directly in many ways. They want to compromise us all.

It is for all these reasons that I am writing this letter, and sending it to everybody who can do anything to free us from this nightmare, in which we are all prisoners. I am addressing this letter in particular to the Holy See, since the only thing which has carried me through this nightmare is my profound faith that sooner or later the justice of God will come to my country.

A Uruguayan officer