

## Reviews

# Amerika, Wacht Auch

*THE Russians are winning the Cold War, and the West is doing the wrong thing about it.* This is the "take-off" point for Dr. Henry A. Kissinger in his *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*\* Although the Communists are partly to blame, Dr. Kissinger is more worried about Western, and particularly, American attitudes; judging by the praise which has been showered on this book from high military and political sources in America, his anxieties are widely shared.

The West, it seems, is "paralysed by the implications of (its) own deterrent strategy". It is not so much that the policy of massive retaliation is wrong—but simply that the Russians are ignoring it, securing their ends by "combining political, psychological, and military pressures" and by using "ambiguous" strategy. "The canons of traditional diplomacy have become a subtle device of Soviet pressure." Translated into real

terms, Dr. Kissinger's formulae suggest that the Soviet Union has been using those methods short of war usually available to governments—and successfully.

In the face of these subtle attacks the United States is impotent. Because of a lack of doctrine, because there is no clear attitude to the relationship of mobile, strategic and all-out force, American governments find themselves powerful but clumsy; like a heavyweight boxer faced with an opponent no heavier, but more nimble.

The answer is to ban the heavy-weights. As either contestant will not only fatally injure himself in falling but will probably wreck the ring and destroy the stadium, Dr. Kissinger would rather see the "match" fought out in a series of rounds, restricted to the lighter classes. In the current jargon, the West will need a "strategic doctrine" of *Limited War*: wars fought for limited objectives previously

agreed upon by the contestants—which will replace the current options of total war or its "stark alternative" total peace (which may mean total surrender). One important question remains unasked in this book: What will the contestants be fighting about? It is Dr. Kissinger's failure to think about the ends of the means he proposes which makes his book almost worthless—and very alarming; though like most bad books, it may be described as "thought provoking".

In convincing detail Dr. Kissinger describes the probable effects of nuclear attack, and makes it clear that all-out war can only be used to negative ends—that is, to *prevent* the opponents' victory and no more; he adds that in Europe a statesman "will not resort to all-out war except as a last resort—and *perhaps not even then*". But he is unable to go beyond the world of "doctrines" and "strategies". We read of the strategic significance of a society's ability to survive nuclear

\*Nuclear weapons and Foreign Policy by Henry Kissinger, Oxford University Press. 40s.

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attack, but no word on the state of society which survives; nor is it clear what would be done for any Communist societies who are returned to the "free world". His doctrine hinges on the need to combine physical with psychological factors — political ends must never be divorced from the military means used to secure them. This seems to be a reasonable principle on which to act, for it is inconceivable in a pseudo-democratic society that wars should be undertaken without some form of control by the accredited politicians. However, the relations between politicians and soldiers is never made clear in the book. The politicians are presumed to have objectives *{they will have agreed with the enemy on what these objectives should be}*; and the military will apparently be instructed to seize this piece of land, or remove that particular outlet to the sea.

"Every campaign should be conceived in a series of self-contained phases, each of which implies a political objective and with a sufficient interval between them to permit the application of political pressures.

"Therefore, too, it will be necessary to give up the notion that direct diplomatic contact ceases when military operations begin. Rather, direct contact is never more necessary to ensure that both sides possess the correct information about the consequences of expanding war and to present formulas for a political settlement."

"Lack of secrecy may actually assist in the achievement of military objectives and in a period of the most advanced technology, *battles will approach the stylized contests of the feudal period which serves as much as a test of will as a trial of strength.*"

With his paper war neatly set about him, Kissinger manages to overlook the real processes of war, and the logic which military action tends to create. Although his wars might begin as politicians' wars, he never considers that under the stress of war conditions, changes within the state could produce a change of purpose on the part of the leaders, military or political. He ignores, for example, the worsening military situation which can only be answered by military solutions. The generals find that more resources are needed, that there are irritating hold-ups on supplies. There is then the likelihood that the military leadership will find it necessary to trade political control—as seems to have happened in Germany during the first World War. Indeed, one conclusion that may be drawn from this book is that military leadership will be a necessary prerequisite of political success. The sort of politico-military integration envisaged by Kissinger can hardly be achieved unless the two groups are embodied in the same in-

dividuals or the two sources of "management" are inextricably linked.

The paradox which runs throughout the book has been illustrated already in Kissinger's views on the conduct of limited war. His insistence that diplomatic contact must be maintained "even during hostilities" is embroidered in his version of an "inspection system". (In passing, he pours ice-cold water on the current "open-skies" plans and any schemes which try to secure effective warning of impending all-out attack. "It will be up to the contestants to make their attacking flights look like training flights!") The author's inspectors — "experts of the other side because this would give their reports much higher credibility"—could supply

"the precise information required to determine whether the opponent is carrying out his side of the bargain . . . *The information will be useful* because at best the enemy will gain a tactical advantage which can be overcome by retaliation."

The inspectors could also serve as points of political contact. Thus the mechanics of (Kissinger's) arms limitation might also bring about the possibility of a rapid settlement should the contenders so desire.

This begs the obvious question: if the two contenders are prepared to permit inspectors on each other's territory and **maintain** diplomatic contact, why should they kill off each other's nationals?

To make his return to the "stylized contests of the feudal period" at all feasible the author has to indulge in some highly imaginative historical analysis where "limited warfare" and "absolute warfare" fit into two types of international society. Thus, "status quo" and "revolutionary" powers are ranged against each other during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as if there were only ideological differences between states. There is a basic, "legitimate" arrangement accepted by all the major powers; but this becomes a "revolutionary system when one power or group of powers rejects either the arrangements of the settlement or the domestic structure of the other states."

"In a legitimate order, disputes are blunted by a shared understanding that no alternative order is envisaged by the contestants; wars will be fought *in the name\** of the existing system and the peace will be justified as a better expression of agreed arrangements."

\* All italics except these are my own.

The tendency of "status quo" powers to confront the "revolutionary" with methods learned "in a more secure environment" is reflected in a naive inclination on the part of Western statesmen to believe Russia's protestations of peaceful intention.

CHAPMAN & HALL

"When an established order is confronted by a revolutionary order, its survival depends on the ability to see through appearances and to keep the implied challenge from becoming overt . . . So it was when the French Revolution burst upon an unbelieving Europe, and when Hitler challenged the Versailles system. So it has been with the relations of the rest of the world toward the Soviet bloc."

The easy equation here of "legitimacy", "established order", and "the rest of the world" provides Kissinger with the basis for his division of wars into total and limited, revolutionary and legitimate. Inject into this argument a spirit of righteousness and the West is almost as well equipped for ideological warfare as the Communists are supposed to be. Nowhere does he tackle the fact that the character of a war is relative to the movements within states as well as between them. The strength of military parties, sovereigns, farmers, national minorities, foreign dependencies are appropriately glossed over for they would not fit into Kissinger's ideological formulae.

The same ability to reduce to tidy compartments highly complex set-ups is revealed in his treatment of "orthodox" Communist military and political doctrine, and in his picture of Soviet and American society. When Mao Tse-Tung refers to "a correct military doctrine" Kissinger discovers fiendish Chinese tricks of strategy. "He (Mao) places great emphasis on the ability to create illusions for the enemy and then to strike him with a surprise attack; . . . He expresses this principle in sixteen words: 'Enemy advances, we retreat; enemy halts, we harass; enemy tires, we attack; enemy retreats, we pursue'." It is hard to imagine a military leader who would not rather be thought of as being able to surprise his enemy. If there were a "correct Marxist line" on how to make flies walk in time to music, Kissinger would doubtless attach to it all the evils of a Jacobin plot.

It is important to note that, while the author treats with the usual scorn Marxist interpretations of history, the inherent contradictions of Capitalism etc., he accepts as axiomatic the Leninist view that Communist and Capitalist worlds must inevitably collide in a win-or-lose final struggle.

"From Lenin, to Stalin, to Mao, and to the current Soviet leadership, the insistence on superior historical understanding, on endless and inevitable conflict with not-Soviet States, on ultimate victory has been

un-varying. Part of the reason for the misunderstanding by the non-Soviet world of Soviet motivations is that more attention is paid to Soviet announcements meant for public consumption and couched in the simple slogans of propaganda, than to Soviet doctrinal discussion."

With this statement in mind, what should we make of the following extract from "Kommunist", the "main political periodical of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, August 28th, 1957:

*"While Lenin's view was valid for the time when it was formulated, a completely new historical situation had arisen . . . In our times the political, economic, moral, and military forces which counteract war and which make it possible to avert war have grown beyond belief. Because of this war has ceased to be fatalistically inevitable, as the Twentieth Congress pointed out in its resolutions."*

Do these sound like "simple slogans of propaganda"? The dependence of Western defence policy on Communist doctrine is not only unfortunate—it suggests an ominous lack of original thought on both sides of the Atlantic. Can we maintain "peaceful co-existence"? Can our society produce a policy other than the reflex actions of a frightened animal?

Dr. Kissinger's doctrine is itself an appropriation of what he deems to be the Communist "method". As limited warfare is "already considered by Soviet doctrine as a strategic opportunity" we should be on better grounds by adopting counter-measures more relevant to Soviet policies. But having told his readers that we shall be tackling the Communists on their own ground, Dr. Kissinger must produce a series of reassuring comments on the respective strengths of American and Soviet societies.

"In limited nuclear warfare everything depends on daring and leadership of a higher order—qualities in which both by tradition and training our armed forces are likely to excel those of the U.S.S.R. Self-reliance exists in the American officer-corps because it is drawn from a society in which individual initiative has been traditionally encouraged. By the same token, these qualities will be difficult to realise in the Soviet armed forces because nowhere in the Soviet society can models for them be found."

This, of a society whose differentials and awards to top professional men are as high if not higher than those of any Western country.

It is not his spurious sociology, nor his one-sided plans for military warfare which should worry us. Nor, even, can we be shocked by the cool acceptance of force as an instrument of policy. Those who feel that the use of force, as a means to an end, is the height of human folly will find plenty of ammunition in this book. But the complete lack of any clear idea of the ends to which force should be put—here is cause for alarm. All that the cream of the "power elite" can produce is the ability to *act*. Action in the face of opposing and successful policy has become the major American pre-occupation, but it is action unsupported by a constructive attitude towards society. The prospect is one of two societies implacably locked in eternal struggle but, periodically, having to come to some sort of accommodation; of two societies precariously poised, but needing to maintain some kind of "dynamism".

In his closing pages. Dr. Kissinger discusses the "adequacy of leadership" of such a "dynamic" society. The task for the United States, as "the strongest and perhaps most vital power of the free world" is to demonstrate that—

"... democracy is able to find the moral certainty to act without the support of fanaticism and to run risks without a guarantee of success." . . . "the problem is one of striking a balance between organisation and the need for inspiration. . . Without inspiration, a society will stagnate . . . Leadership is the refusal to confine action to average performance; it is the willingness to define purposes perhaps only vaguely apprehended by the multitude."

"A statesman must act as if his inspirations were already experience, as if his aspiration were 'truth'."

Couple "dynamism", "inspiration" and "moral certainty" to a grimly held belief in the superiority of his own society and the need for leadership and we have what Dr. Kissinger would call "Courage".

"In foreign policy courage and success stand in a casual relationship."

"In foreign policy certainty is conferred as much by philosophy as by fact. It derives from the imposition of purpose on events."

We are given no sign that Western democracy will be able to find "moral certainty without the support of fanaticism", neither are we told the source of the leader's inspiration or philosophy. With "success" the only criterion, "courage" might be a very dangerous ingredient of policy.