

the several differing comments in this *worldview* symposium make clear, there is sharp opposition on the stand the Council should take, on the need for expert technological and military opinion, and on the authority proper to the Church in such matters. But what these differing comments also make clear—the one large issue on which there is general agreement—is the need for further debate and discussion, so that when those who represent the Church do speak they do so with the clarity the subject allows and the moral urgency it demands.

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The question before the Vatican Council is not going to be solved by those who would suggest to the nuclear powers that all nuclear arms be

disposed of, unilaterally if necessary; nor will it be solved by those who would work out a theoretically neat plan of limited nuclear war that could be justified under traditional just war principles. As the writers who follow make clear, what the churches must cope with is the existence of a strategic nuclear deterrent—a deterrent whose effectiveness cannot be encompassed within traditional concepts of limited war. Until the churches acknowledge and grapple with this problem they will remain as spectators on the sidelines while some of the momentous issues of our time are being decided. The alternative is to engage in intensive self-education and then to speak within the boundaries allowed by the subject and under the obligations imposed by a human and religious commitment.

in the magazines

In the September issue of *The Catholic World*, William V. Kennedy—who is described in an introductory note as “a military analyst”—deals with “The Morality of American Nuclear Policy.” Citing testimony given by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara before the Senate Armed Services Committee last February, Kennedy characterizes our current defense policy as one which consists in the building up of “our strategic retaliatory forces” so that they are “visibly capable of fully destroying the Soviet society.” This policy also demands that the U.S. assure the Communists “‘of our ability at all times to retaliate decisively against Soviet cities, even under the worst circumstances,’” he says, again quoting McNamara.

But such strategy, writes Mr. Kennedy, is “an inversion of the traditional Christian viewpoint that the destruction of the enemy’s military forces is the only legitimate target, with destruction of civilian, essentially non-combatant lives and property to be permitted only as an unavoidable consequence.” He adds that “the argument that Mr. McNamara has constructed this threat as a ‘deterrent,’ and that the sheer terror implicit in the threat makes total war ‘unlikely’ begs the issue. The threat exists” nonetheless.

Kennedy then proceeds to another area in which, he contends, a vocal and forceful minority has again

made its view of nuclear strategy prevail. This is the view “that we are restricted by conscience from a ‘first strike’ and we are incapable of overcoming Communist military power without leveling the Russian, Chinese and satellite ‘society’ in the process. He argues that “there is no rationally established system of morality—including the Christian moral code—that says, in effect, that a man or a society must allow an assailant to strike what could be a fatal blow before taking countermeasures sufficient to deflect and to prevent repetition of the blow.”

Indeed, the author continues, “Secretary McNamara was wrong in stating, during his testimony to the Senate, that there is no body of responsible professional thought in the Department of Defense which holds that the United States is justified in certain special circumstances in launching a full-scale nuclear blow before an enemy’s weapons are exploding all over the free world. There is such a body of thought,” Kennedy avers, “and it extends all the way to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

He notes the availability of intelligence sources and specialized apparatus to provide the kind of warnings which “are certain to precede any Communist attack with nuclear weapons,” and states his conviction that “given a situation in which he was faced with reasonable certainty of a Soviet nuclear assault, there can scarcely be any doubt that any

President would use his prerogatives as commander-in-chief to order such a spoiling, mis-named 'pre-emptive' attack."

President Kennedy, for example, "was most vehement in denouncing any idea of such an attack on the part of the United States," yet "during the missile crisis of October 1962, he came within a word or two of warning the Soviets that he was prepared to act in such a manner. This was done," says the writer, "when cautioning Mr. Khrushchev that any missile attack on Central or South America would provoke a full-scale nuclear attack by the United States upon the Soviet Union itself."

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"The limits of our understanding of present and future technology and the implication of these limits" concern Albert Wohlstetter in the October *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. "Despite our wishes to the contrary," he says, "we are in the dark about the future of science and technology and still more so about the long-term military and political future. We should be extremely skeptical, therefore, of sweeping predictions that come tied to a prescription for urgent and drastic action. The apocalyptic pairs of alternatives 'Destroy the Russians or they'll destroy us' as against 'Disarm or face world annihilation' are counsels of desperation. They abandon not only patience, but intelligence." Of course "uncertainty is hard to tolerate, but it is a hard fact of life. It demands flexibility, preparedness to change direction with new knowledge, and the use of every shred of knowledge that we have, including our knowledge of the glacial slowness of the cold war's receding."

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Herman Will, Jr. asks Methodists "Why the Concern About MLE?" in the November 1 issue of the denominational publication *Concern*. He notes that "neither the General Conference nor the General Board of Christian Social Concerns [of The Methodist Church] has spoken on the matter directly," but he finds that the proposal for a multilateral nuclear force "falls into a category covered by one sentence of the General Conference: 'Every phase of a nation's foreign policy must be judged in part by whether it makes possible disarmament under law.'"

Mr. Will reaches the conclusion that the American plan does not meet this requirement and, indeed, would be "a serious obstacle to progress in the disarmament negotiations."

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The Christian mission in "The Political Struggle for Responsible Nationhood" is the subject of an article by J. Russell Chandran in the November 15

issue of *The United Church Herald*. Currently a visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary, Dr. Chandran is principal of United Theological College in Bangalore, India.

"The new nations are seeking more than material prosperity," he writes. "Primarily they are seeking the dignity of being equal partners in the community of nations." But "the church cannot simply be an uncommitted spectator in this struggle. Nor is it possible to define clearly the precise character of the church's involvement in any particular situation." Nonetheless, says Dr. Chandran, "in understanding the church's task in this movement we can point to two principles; Christ's goal of restoring all people to the dignity of the children of God, and our discernment of the hand of God in the modern political revolutions."

Of the encounter between democracy and communism in Africa and Asia the author notes that "it is certainly dangerous to sharpen the issue in such a way as to encourage the development of political tensions which might lead to military action. We have to accept the fact that communism still appeals to vast masses of people in the world. For anyone to imagine that communism can be destroyed through military action is sheer political and spiritual blindness." Of course, "this is not to say that we should be indifferent to political or military aggression which may call for appropriate military action. But the church's concern for peace and harmony among the nations should be as dynamic as its concern for justice and democracy. Therefore the task of promoting peaceful co-existence with free dialogue among the people is a genuine part of the Christian mission."

It is necessary to recognize, he remarks later, "that the present revolution will not stop until all the people of the world have been liberated from poverty and other forms of want." And "the church today has a special responsibility to interpret and promote this revolution. Because of the apathy—even disobedience—of the church in the past, I believe that God has caused the awakening regarding economic justice to come chiefly through the Communist movement. No longer has the church the right to lag behind other movements in the struggle for the restoration of human dignity. . . . *If the church had been committed to the Nazareth manifesto of Jesus, the Communist manifesto of Marx and Engels would have been unnecessary.*" [Italics the author's.]

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In other periodicals:

"Counter-Insurgency and the New Foreign Relations," by Roger Hagan, *The Correspondent*, Autumn.

"Soviet-American Diplomacy and *Pacem in Terris*," by Leslie Dewart, *Cross Currents*, Summer.

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