

Proliferation: The Need for Careful Analysis

A World of Nuclear Powers?
 Edited by Alastair Buchan. Prentice Hall. 176 pp. \$3.95/\$1.95.

by John K. Moriarty

"Smith & Wesson made 'em all the same size," declared the cynical wags of two or three generations past, and in the lawless world of the Old West every man carried a gun. Some two decades ago the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* set its macabre clock at a few minutes to doomsday, and in the succeeding years many scientists and "strategic analysts" predicted that nuclear weapons would soon be both cheap and widely available. Events since World War II, however, suggest that while nuclear weapons may indeed be cheap and plentiful some day, that day will not be soon, i.e., within the next five, and probably even ten years. But the basic problem of potential nuclear proliferation remains the same. To a determined nation with an adequate industrial base, the means are available to manufacture nuclear weapons over a span of several years; moreover, the unlikely possibility cannot be completely ruled out that an existing nuclear power might find it desirable to make nuclear weapons available to a non-nuclear ally. In a lawless, irrational world where even a small nation might do mortal damage to an enemy, all would be of very nearly "the same size."

Just as the real world of 1970, however, is not going to be the one that was feared in the 'fifties,

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the real world of 1980 or 1990 may not necessarily be the one that is feared now. (In fact, one may be fairly sure even now that the world of 2000 will almost certainly not be the one that Herman Kahn — who has never been able, in spite of his brilliance, to resist the temptation to indulge in occasional strategic buffoonery — posits as "not implausible" in *Thinking About the Unthinkable*: a world in which "Malayan guerrillas, Cuban rebels, Algerian terrorists, right-wing counter-terrorists, the Puerto Rican Independence Party, or even gangsters" would possess nuclear weapons.) But whatever the future of nuclear proliferation may be, and whatever may be the impact of such proliferation on future world order, it is clear that the outlines of that future (and therefore the most likely means of affecting it) can best be discerned by a careful, dispassionate analysis of the factors which will determine nuclear proliferation — rather than by, say, viewing with panic and shouting for instant world government.

The book which Mr. Buchan has edited constitutes just such a careful appraisal of the problem. Buchan has assembled a group of well-qualified analysts — Leonard Beaton, Theo Sommer Sisir Gupta, Karl Birnbaum, Kei Wakaizumi, Stanley Hoffmann, Lord Chalfont, and Urs Schwarz — who have explored not only the technical and economic requirements for becoming a nuclear power, but have analyzed in depth the political and strategic factors which might affect the decisions of some of the more likely candidates — i.e., Germany, India, Sweden and Japan.

The world is not going to wake up some morning and find that Jomo Kenyatta or Fidel Castro has made an A-bomb in secret. As Leonard Beaton lays out very well in his excellent opening chapter: "Nuclear weapons have always been difficult to build and they still are.

... Those who have embarked on the construction of nuclear weapons have had to recognize that it involves building a major modern industry and that this makes serious demands on defense budgets, on technicians and on scientific manpower." If a nation decides to build weapons from uranium (as have the U. S., the USSR, Britain, France and China), a means of enriching the natural uranium must be developed. The first U. S. gaseous diffusion plant for this purpose cost \$1,000,000,000, and the French plant is expected to cost about the same. Gas centrifuge technology is still insufficiently developed and will probably remain a frightfully expensive process, even when (and if) it becomes reliable. Making weapons from plutonium will not involve these huge outlays, but the requirements are far from simple, even for advanced industrial nations: "If the intention is to build weapons (or to be able to build them), they must find a supply of uranium; they must construct the reactors or find someone else to do it for them; they must separate out the plutonium (which demands a special plant); a bomb must be designed and built; and a suitable site must be found for testing the bomb." India is the only Nth power today which has gone as far as building a separation plant.

Beyond the actual construction of a nuclear weapon (or rather, concurrently with construction), a reliable means of delivery for the weapons must also be developed. And once the strategic planners of a nation begin to consider the question of delivery of nuclear weapons, they are in the midst of the welter of strategic problems — capability to penetrate, reliability, probability of retaliation, vulnerability of their own nuclear forces to a preemptive strike, means of defense — which have occupied the present nuclear powers for so long. The point is not, of course, that no

Nth country will make the necessary effort to become a nuclear power. Several have already thought the benefits substantial enough to justify vast national sacrifices. Others clearly may follow. But here really is the crux of the problem of nuclear proliferation. Aside from the matter of industrial and scientific capability, just what will determine the decisions of Nth countries to "go nuclear"?

It is this specific analysis of the nuclear outlook for the four potential nuclear powers previously named that makes Mr. Buchan's book such a useful one. For, in the final analysis, the decision to acquire nuclear weapons will be made by particular countries under particular circumstances. What determines these circumstances? How can they be influenced?

While all the argument and counter-argument adduced by the various analysts cannot properly be summarized, at least some of their basic conclusions can be. Declares Theo Sommer: "If Germans — both the public and the officials — are worrying at all, it is about their security and not about their nuclear status. None of the forces and factors discernible on the present political scene seem to portend a basic change of this prevailing mood during the years ahead." While it is possible to conceive of circumstances (such as the disintegration of the Western Alliance) under which the Germans might decide to go it alone and embark on a nuclear weapons program, "West Germany would only stand to lose" from such an attempt. "It is hard to see any merit in a policy that could only isolate West Germany and ruin forever what few chances re-unification may have, given patience and restraint."

In "The Indian Dilemma," Sisir Gupta makes clear that the Indians face precisely that — a dilemma. Since the Chinese invasion an increasingly influential body of opinion in India has presented strong arguments for Indian nuclear weapons. But the majority view still holds that "while the

Chinese might well like to use their weapons against their neighbors, if India was ever subjected to such a threat or an actual nuclear attack, in all conceivable situations this would lead to the extension of the conflict and reprisals against China by one or more great powers. . . ." Moreover, an "Indian nuclear capability would make no difference to China's capacity to create mischief along the borders since such activities would in any event have to be met by conventional methods."

Mr. Gupta concludes, however, with a warning that is directly relevant to the dealings of the nuclear powers with all non-nuclear countries: "It will be a great tragedy if the statesmen of the world identify the problem of non-proliferation as one merely of preventing non-nuclear powers like India, and other countries in a similar dilemma, from manufacturing nuclear weapons, rather than as one of taking steps to advance the world to a higher level of effective international order and collective security." And most of the contributors to this book make clear that such a level of "effective international order and collective security" cannot merely be one enforced by the nuclear powers upon the others, but must involve positive steps toward a reduction of world tensions and concomitant reduction of armaments by the great powers themselves.

Sweden's policy line on the nuclear issue has remained unaltered since 1960. It consists of keeping open the nuclear option, while at the same time watching anxiously the progress of proliferation and/or disarmament in other significant countries. "The decisive consideration in Sweden's case with regard to any kind of non-proliferation treaty will always be its effectiveness as an instrument in preventing the general proliferation and conventionalization of nuclear arms. . . . If there is any single non-nuclear power whose adherence to a non-proliferation treaty may be considered crucial for a Swedish

signature it is probably the Federal Republic of Germany."

The Japanese Foreign Office too has insisted that the present nuclear powers "must spell out their position regarding this matter of nuclear disarmament and that adequate measures must be taken for the security of non-nuclear powers. Only after this, a treaty against nuclear proliferation can receive the full support of all the nations." While "the policy of Japan is neither to arm herself with nuclear weapons nor to allow their importation into the country by a foreign power," the rapidly developing role of Japan as a world power (and Japanese conceptions of that role) can clearly cause major changes in the future Japanese attitude toward acquisition of nuclear weapons. In Japan, as in other non-nuclear powers, the dominant factor affecting the decision to acquire nuclear weapons will be the attitudes of the nuclear powers themselves toward each other and toward the problem of world order.

Urs Schwarz' analysis of the role of the non-nuclear powers, "if the great powers are not able to agree on universal measures to prevent the dissemination and proliferation of nuclear armaments," is both imaginative and thought-provoking. From his conclusion that effective guarantees to (or pressures upon) the non-nuclear powers by the nuclear powers would be largely impracticable, to his proposals for reducing the incentives to acquire nuclears, Schwarz offers the diplomats in Geneva much to think about. His analysis of the possibilities of unilateral renunciation, non-nuclear zones, and international inspection is equally helpful. His proposal that the non-nuclear nations themselves attempt to move toward a greater solidarity, and thus constitute "a new force for peace," may be asking too much — but the problem of nuclear proliferation itself demands imaginative solutions. It is clear, even from this brief summary, that much depends upon the actions of a few key nations.

The Drama of Vatican II

Henri Fesquet. Random House. 831 pp. \$15.00

Henri Fesquet, whose daily reports for the French newspaper *Le Monde* during the four sessions of Vatican II make up this volume, brought a number of special credentials to the task. Among them, Michael Novak notes in his introduction to the English edition prepared by Bernard Murchland, were friendships with leading theologians and churchmen at the Ecumenical Council, which gave M. Fesquet "an entrée denied to nearly all other journalists."

The New Theology and Morality

Henlee H. Barnette. Westminster. 120 pp. \$1.85 (paper)

Dr. Barnette, Prof. of Christian Ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has set out "to analyze and to evaluate critically [new theological and ethical] trends in the hope that the non-theological specialist may better understand them." There are sections devoted to "The New Theology: 'God Is Dead'," "The New Ethics: 'Love Alone'," "The New Sex Code: 'Permissiveness with Affection'," "The New Church: 'Servant in a Secular Society'," and "The New Dimensions of War: 'Thinking About the Unthinkable.'"

Capitulation: The Lesson of German Catholicism

Carl Amery. Herder & Herder. 231 pp. \$5.50

Has the relation between the Roman Catholic Church in Germany and the (West) German government undergone considerable change since the war years? One German Catholic's answer is apparent from the title of this book. In a foreword to the English translation, J. M. Cameron examines the wider implications of Amery's diagnosis for other Christian nations.

History and Futurology

Ossip K. Flechtheim. Verlag Anton Hain (Meisenheim am Glan, Germany). 126 pp. D.M. 13,40 (paper)

The "futurological" approach to man's society and culture involves "marshalling the ever-growing resources of science and scholarship" to "do more than methodically employ retrospective analysis and hypothetical predictions"; it also tries to "establish the degree of their credibility and probability." In the present volume, Flechtheim contrasts this view of history with traditional linear views, in particular those of Hegel, Marx, Toynbee, Max Weber and Alfred Weber, and provides "Some Thoughts on the Future of Political Institutions."

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