other voices

THE ROLE OF WORLD LAW IN ARMS CONTROL

As worldview goes to press, the U.S. and USSR have announced preliminary strategic-arms limitation talks to begin in Helsinki, Finland on November 17. Political commentators differ in their estimates of what the two most powerful nations hope to and can accomplish by participation in these meetings. But as attorney S. C. Yuter argues in the following article reprinted from the October issue of Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, their deliberations may be for naught if whatever agreement they reach is not made binding on all parties engaged in the arms race.

Law is the backbone which keeps man erect. This is certainly true domestically, but law is sadly lacking in the international arena. It is dog eat dog when threats to national security are involved. Only the balance of terror has maintained the nuclear peace, and with the spread of nuclear weapons even the nuclear peace is threatened.

The only substitute for nuclear terror appears to be effective world law. A first step toward effective world law is to give legal effect to United Nations Resolution 2032 (1965): "... arrangements to ban effectively all nuclear weapon tests in all environments, taking into account the improved possibilities for international cooperation in the field of seismic detection. . . ."

In the absence of a universal test ban, no meaningful nuclear arms limitation agreement will be reached because the Soviet Union needs to be free to deploy an anti-ballistic missile system as a defense to the coming Chinese nuclear threat, and to be free periodically to "thicken" it to keep up with Chinese missile progress. Thus, to avoid entering a new and more costly round in the strategic arms race, it is essential to bring mainland China within the scope of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. If China no longer conducts nuclear weapon tests it is most unlikely that she will be able to perfect an operational nuclear missile arsenal. In that case the Soviet Union might readily agree to a meaningful A.B.M. limitation agreement.

Much of the A.B.M. debate fails to take into account Soviet views of the coming Chinese nuclear threat. A principal argument against moving toward deployment of an A.B.M. system is that it might prevent a missile limitation agreement with the Soviets. But there is no reasonable ground for hoping that the Soviets will agree to a meaningful A.B.M. limitation agreement in view of their attitude about the Maoist Chinese threat. According to a 1967 article in "Literator Gazette," an important Soviet political-literary weekly:

"... the great strategic blueprint of Mao-Tse-tung, Mao's projected 'Super Reich' . . . does not stop with the 'Maoization' of Asia. . . . 'China today, tomorrow the whole world' . . . is the formula.

"Peking has also decided that a third world war is inevitable for the realization of 'Mao's master plan.' Unless there is a global collision, during which (again by Mao's own admission) 'a third to a half of the world's population will perish,' his strategic blueprint cannot be fulfilled."

Some will argue that it takes one would-be world conqueror to know another one. But even if the Soviets are wrong about the long-term Chinese threat they no doubt believe that Maoism is a new Nazism, and they most certainly will not leave any stone unturned to prevent a duplication of their World War II disaster, in which more than twenty million Soviets were killed. Almost every family lost a father, husband or son.

Given this attitude about the Maoist Chinese, any hope for a meaningful A.B.M. limitation agreement is futile unless the coming Chinese nuclear threat can be removed.

President Nixon recognized this problem at his news conference on March 14, 1969 when he announced the plan to deploy the Safeguard A.B.M. system: "I would imagine that the Soviet Union would be just as reluctant as we would be to leave their country naked against a potential Chinese Communist threat.

"So the abandoning of the entire system, particularly as long as the Chinese threat is there, I think neither country would look on with much favor."

Not only is the Chinese nuclear threat blocking an arms limitation agreement, but, in view of the Chinese nuclear threat now perceived by India and ultimately
Japan, further nuclear proliferation to these countries is most likely unless the non-proliferation line can be drawn before India goes nuclear. Proliferation to India and Japan will, sooner or later, provide an excuse for West Germany to go nuclear—which could easily lead to a nuclear war between the United States and the USSR, given Soviet attitudes about nuclear-armed Germans. If a nuclear-armed China were to give nuclear weapons to Egypt in order to substitute Chinese influence for Soviet influence in that country, the consequences could easily be disastrous for the Middle East. This also might lead to a U.S.-USSR nuclear war if the United States were to support Israel and the Soviet Union were to back Egypt.

What are the chances that China would submit voluntarily to the Test Ban? To answer that question one must consider the principal goals of mainland China. According to Yuan-li Wu of the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, these goals are as follows:

1. To insure the security and territorial integrity of the Peoples' Republic of China (P.R.C.)
2. To maintain and strengthen the independent power position of the Chinese Communist Party (C.C.P.)
3. To build a "socialist" state under the guidance of the C.C.P. and ultimately create a Communist society in China
4. To develop a modern, expanding, and versatile economy capable of sustaining an adequate national security program
5. To secure a decisive voice in international affairs
6. To erode American influence in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, designated by Peking as "storm centers of world revolution," to weaken Soviet positions in the international Communist movement; and to strengthen her own in their place—particularly in Asia
7. To expand China's influence in other susceptible areas by both overt and secretive means, including (under a Maoist-oriented leadership) promotion of the Maoist revolutionary model—i.e., wars of national liberation
8. Ultimately, to liquidate "imperialism" and "modern revisionism" and bring into being a universal Communist society.

With respect to the need for an operational nuclear weapons arsenal to help accomplish these goals, in June, 1967 the Chinese announced:

"The success of China's hydrogen bomb test has further broken the nuclear monopoly of the United States imperialism and Soviet revisionism and dealt a telling blow at their policy of nuclear blackmail.

"It is a very great encouragement and support to the Vietnamese people in their heroic war against United States aggression and for national salvation, to the Arab people in their resistance to aggression by the United States and British imperialists and their tool, Israel, and to the revolutionary people of the whole world."

A major purpose of China's nuclear weapons program is to neutralize the nuclear advantage of the United States and the Soviet Union, leaving China free to accomplish her goals. Mainland China, therefore, will not submit to the Nuclear Test Ban, at least until she has caught up with the super-powers, which is highly unlikely.

The Test Ban Treaty and also the Non-Proliferation Treaty are essentially international contracts rather than international laws. National law binds all of the people in a country, not only those who agree with the law, whereas these treaties bind only those nations which assent to the banned activity and do not bind those nations which wish to conduct the banned activity. In any country, it would absurd to call a rule banning an activity—for example, speeding—a law if only those who agreed with the ban were bound by the rule. The same is true in the international arena: the Test Ban and Non-Proliferation Treaties are not truly international laws since they bind only those nations which assent to be bound by adhering to the treat. Therefore to have an effective arms control law it is necessary that all nations be bound by that law.

An analysis of past and present arms control and war prevention treaties leads to the following conclusions concerning a multi-lateral arms control treaty: (1) it is ineffective if all states capable of significant violations are not bound; (2) it is ineffective if there is no provision for collective enforcement; and (3) even if collective enforcement is provided, it is not likely to be effective except with respect to parties and non-parties subject to the pressure of, and the will promptly to apply, collectively supported overwhelming military power to prevent violations. Thus, the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty has been ineffective to prevent French and Chinese nuclear tests in the atmosphere, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty is most likely to be ineffective to prevent nuclear proliferation to India, Japan and eventually West Germany—in both treaties only parties are bound and there is no provision for collective enforcement. Under the peacekeeping provisions of the United Nations Charter, however, both parties and non-parties are subject to collective enforcement, and the Charter has been effective even against non-parties in cases where overwhelming military power was

November 1969 19
available to prevent violations — specifically when both the United States and the USSR actively backed United Nations resolutions.

Every effort must be made to bring China within the scope of the Test Ban Treaty. If this can be accomplished, a giant step will be taken toward the goal of world nuclear peace through law. If this cannot be accomplished, then the nuclear arms race will almost certainly escalate to vast A.B.M. systems and A.B.M.-penetrating offensive missiles. This is so, because any arms limitation agreement requires the consent of at least the Soviet Union and, given the Soviet view of the Maoist Chinese threat, it will certainly not agree to a meaningful A.B.M. limitation agreement. Moreover, increasing Soviet A.B.M. deployment in response to Chinese missile progress will, sooner or later, begin to erode the U.S. deterrent. The U.S. response will most likely be to deploy compensating offensive missile systems (such as MIRVs — multiply independently targetable re-entry vehicles) as well as a comparable A.B.M. system. This response would be deemed necessary to keep the nuclear balance and thus prevent American diplomatic credibility from being impaired in a future crisis such as the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. It is thus unlikely that even an offensive missile limitation agreement can be reached.

It is also probable that the Soviet Union would test its A.B.M. system rather than expend vast sums of money on an increasingly large and untested system, so that the Test Ban Treaty is likely to be a casualty of the arms race. The demise of the Non-Proliferation Treaty would almost certainly follow. Arms control would be driven out by the arms race.

The choice is stark indeed; either the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is made universally binding — as domestic laws are nationally binding — to establish the beginning of effective world arms control law, or the nuclear arms race will escalate dramatically starting with A.B.M. and probably leading to the demise of the Test Ban and Non-Proliferation Treaties. If the Soviet Union believed that a universal test ban would terminate the Chinese nuclear weapons program, and agreed to support it, it seems most likely that the Soviet Union would also agree to a meaningful strategic arms limitation agreement, including both A.B.M. and offensive missiles. A convenient way to establish a universal test ban is by attaching such a rider to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as advocated by India. But although the two super-powers jointly have the overwhelming power necessary to provide an effective international police enforcement capability, to enforce a Universal Test Ban Treaty which might be challenged by China, it seems unlikely that they both will comply with India’s request for a universal test ban.

The probable result will thus be: A.B.M., yes — effective world law, no.

**current reading**


Caution: Revolution still in progress. Our ninth year. From U.N. documents, personal interviews and written accounts, reports and his own long familiarity with the area, Prof. Marcum (he is director of African language and area center at Lincoln U., Pa.) has pieced together the details of the Angolan revolution — its background, groupings, consequences both in Lisbon and the colony, and worldwide diplomatic responses. A projected second volume will chronicle the events of ’62-’68.

No Exit from Vietnam

Sir Robert Thompson. McKay. 308 pp. $4.50

The author, who has “always supported the presence of the United States in Vietnam” but is critical of her conduct of the war, focuses on the period from February 1965 to November 1968 “when it was fought mainly as an American war.” Sir Robert has acknowledged expertise in the area of counterinsurgency warfare, having served as principal architect of the British victory over Malayan Communist guerrillas in the late ’50’s and as head of the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam from ’61 to ’65.

Religion, Revolution and the Future

Jürgen Moltmann. Scribners. 220 pp. $5.95

“The knot of history should be so tightly tied against each other: Christianity with the past and the unbelievers with the future? I think that this present dilemma can be overcome, but only if Christians call again upon the ’God of hope’ of the Old and New Testaments and testify to him practically and concretely in responsibility for the present.” This is the theme of Prof. Moltmann’s book, which includes a number of the lectures he delivered during a half-year visit to the U.S. on leave from the U. of Tübingen, Germany.

Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970’s

Lincoln P. Bloomfield & Amelia C. Leiss, Knopf. 442 pp. $8.95

Political scientists Bloomfield and Leiss, drawing upon their joint research for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, propose an alternative strategy to unilateral military involvement by the U.S. — a policy of conflict control. Case studies provide a model of the way these "small" wars unfold and the patterns of escalation and defusing; among them, the Bay of Pigs, the Middle East conflicts, the Indonesian War of Independence, the Greek insurgency and the Soviet-Iranian conflict of 1941-47.