

## "Strategic Air Command and World Peace"

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The overriding objective of the United States today is the preservation of peace and our free way of life. Since World War II, we have been forced to divert our full attention from the pleasant pursuit of our own economic and spiritual growth and well-being. We have been forced to deny ourselves the luxury of the tranquility which, historically, sovereign nations have enjoyed in time of peace. We have had to address ourselves to sterner tasks, because of the existence in today's world of a major power bent upon dominating the world by imposing upon nations and peoples everywhere a way of life radically and irreconcilably opposed to all of the things we believe in. This fact has posed a continuous and clear threat to us as a free nation. We have had to meet this threat on many fronts—economic, moral, social, and military. It is against this threat that the mission of the Strategic Air Command, as part of our national military strength, is directed.

Let us examine how the Strategic Air Command is responsive to the threat of war by examining the nature of that threat, and of war itself.

Just as the term "peace" no longer means what it meant a few short decades ago, war can no longer be described in yesterday's terms. We of SAC do not maintain that the basic principles of war have changed much through recent generations. We believe that it is generally agreed, however, that we have entered a new military era. The time-force equation of war has undergone a complete, dynamic, and remarkable revolution within the last 10 years. We must recognize and understand the nature of this change if we are to be successful in avoiding war in the future, because the change is vitally involved in how wars start.

In previous history, wars were generally protracted and long-range undertakings. Nations and their leaders recognized this from the outset. The decision for victory or defeat was the culmination of a long series of actions and reactions, spread out in time, although frequently confined to a small geographic area. The success or failure of a nation's war effort hinged upon a number of things, many unpredictable, which were not set in motion until hostilities were well under way. The progress of war was affected by the success of mobilization and recruiting programs, both forced and voluntary. Genius in tactics such as displayed by leaders from Alexander to Napoleon could overcome geographical or numerical disadvantage. Major technical advances in weapons or equipment by one belligerent could completely reverse an otherwise established trend toward victory or defeat. Changing alliances, deaths of leaders, adverse weather, and a host of the other vagaries of time all had their effect. So in those former times, nations were plunged into war, even though, at the time the decision to fight was made, the outcomes as measured by strengths and resources immediately available was in

considerable doubt. Wars could be, and were, undertaken even though, at the outset, one nation was appallingly weaker or less prepared militarily than the other. This was not necessarily an invitation to defeat, because time was available—time for manpower and industrial mobilization, time for refinements of strategy and tactics, time for proper positioning of military forces, time for development of radically new weapons, time for exercise of all of the variables, many unpredictable, many depending upon pure good fortune.

All of these phases of "protracted war" applied in historic times, but not exclusively in the pages of ancient history. In the past two world conflicts, force in many forms was created and gradually brought to bear on our enemies. The cumulative weight of this force as it was marshaled over a period of years finally surpassed the enemy's capability to resist. At this point, it became decisive and victory was assured.

"Protracted war" passed with the advent of the nuclear age. If we are to be successful in preventing war today, we must recognize the radically changed dimension in today's warfare—the dimension of time. Today, decisive force is already in existence compressed in nuclear weapons stockpiles. It can be applied across the length and breadth of an enemy nation in a few hours or in a few days at the most by long-range jet bombers. I do not mean to imply that in a war today, only a few days would elapse between the first blows and the resumption of a postwar tranquility—far from it. It is clear, however, that the decision—the determination of eventual victory or defeat—will have been reached in the first few days. Whether we desire to face it or not, the cold fact today is that a massive nuclear air assault would be devastating to any nation. Neither nations nor people recover from such blows. There will be no time after war begins for mobilization or for time-consuming development of the tools of war.

If we are to prevent war, we must understand the implications of these facts. It is one of the tenets of modern warfare that the decision in tomorrow's conflict will be reached using only the forces in being at the outset. This has been said many times, but its real meaning lies in the overpowering and inescapable result of this tenet. Its consequence is the key fact in today's strategy. Today, shooting wars are won or lost before they start. If they are fought at all, they would be fought principally to confirm which side had won at the outset. This leads to another inescapable confusion, and one, which we must bear constantly in mind if we are to preserve the peace. The most radical effect of the changes in modern warfare is not upon how wars are won or lost, but upon how they will start. A nation or its leaders can no longer entertain doubts as to the possible outcome. They can no longer speculate upon the intervention of variables, or new weapons, or the other things made possible by time. There will be no time for the operation of these variables. The dominant fact is that no nation can arrive at a deliberate decision to wage war today unless it is clear, beyond any doubt, that victory is assured. Victory doesn't mean emerging from a conflict mortally wounded. The nation which initiates the next war must be positive that a substantial atomic onslaught will not be delivered against it, for such a blow, even in retaliation, would be unacceptable.

I have said that the basic principles of war have not altered, but that wars' mechanics have changed, principally in the dimension of time. I have also said that the result of this change is radical. It is a fact that decision as to victory or defeat is reached before war starts. And it is reasonable to say that a shooting war will probably not start until it has already been won. This means that the cold war in which we are now engaged could be a part of World War III.

The first phase of today's war, as long as two irreconcilable powers possessing great strength face one another, is the "decision phase." The decision is reached during what we used to call peace, and now call "cold war." We are in the decision phase today.

The second phase is the "proof phase," or the application of the power of the enemy to confirm the decision and make way for the next phase.

The last phase is the "exploitation phase." It commences when the will to resist of a vanquished belligerent has been lowered sufficiently for imposition of the national will of the victor upon the survivors of the vanquished. This last phase includes such economic and human exploitations as may have been included in the initial intentions of the victor when he started the shooting, or "proof phrase" of the war.

There are a number of further facts about today's warfare that we must recognize if we are to possess the strength we need to preserve the peace. First, today's war is always potentially global in scope. The reasons for this are obvious. Only a foolhardy nation would ever base its power strategy upon the doubtful assumption that what it started as a localized conflict would remain localized. The only condition under which this assumption could apply would be for one nation to be absolutely and positively guaranteed that the other lacked either resolution or intelligence. For if a nation is determined to survive and preserve its way of life, it must avoid risk of extinction, regardless of how that extinction might be brought about. And if a nation is intelligent, it must realize that objectives can be won just as surely in piecemeal advances as by one all-out blow. Therefore, combine both intelligence and resolution in a nation, and you have a nation against whom you dare not instigate limited actions unless you are ready to accept the possible consequence of all-out war.

This leads us back to where we started. An enemy cannot start a shooting war unless he has already won the decisive phase, and he dare not, in the face of strength, resolution, and intelligence on our part, start a so-called "limited action" unless he is in the same position.

It follows then that our only significant strength is our strength in being. Our military strength is produced by our people and by our industry. It reposes in our various services. But every military man, soldier, sailor, or airman, agrees on one thing. As long as there are airplanes and air weapons, the successful conduct of any military operation hinges upon the possession of air superiority. Strength on the ground or on the sea can only prevail, or for that matter survive, if the air above it is friendly. I think we all agree that we can neither engage nor win unless we have air superiority.

Our first job therefore is to win the airpower battle. The airpower battle is a global battle. It is not a localized battle, and it cannot be won locally. Airpower, especially strategic airpower, is flexible. It can strike at long range or at short range; it can strike at a single target from many base areas, or at many targets from a single-base area. It can take off from widely dispersed bases and mass over a target system 5,000 miles distant. It can do these things for the enemy as well as tactical air strength is constantly growing. When I speak of air strength I am not speaking only of airplanes. I am speaking of airfields, fuel supplies, depots, stockpiles of aircraft parts, weapons and weapons stockpiles, control and communications centers, highly trained and skilled manpower—and airplanes. These constitute airpower. These are the things that must be destroyed if the airpower battle is to be won. The airpower battle is a battle we cannot lose, because its loss is defeat. Like any battle, the airpower battle is part of war. It is the decisive battle in modern war—the initial battle and the one whose outcome will clearly determine who wins. The decisive phase of the airpower battle is won or lost before the shooting war starts. This brings us again to the conclusion that the cold war in which the United States is now engaged could already be a part of World War III. And I repeat, the result of the struggle for airpower supremacy will determine who wins and who loses. More importantly, as

long as we win the airpower battle during peacetime, we will be successful in deterring war and preserving peace.

At this point, you might ask, "Aren't you making one big assumption?" Before you do, let me agree with you. Our national policy is one of deterrence. Our national leaders recently made some very clear statements about that policy. We must deter aggression. We deter by making it clear that we have strength, and that its application will cost the enemy more than he could possibly gain by attacking us. Our assumption is, of course, that those who make decisions in the Soviet bloc are not without reason—that they are not deliberately bent upon suicide. If they are reasonable men, and we have cause to believe that they are not only reasonable, but practical, they will not start a shooting war when there is any serious doubt that they can win it. They will not start a shooting war, regardless of their definition of victory, as long as it is clear to them that no matter how they go about it, it will cost them more than they can possibly gain.

Assuming the Soviets are guided by reason, even by selfish reason, they will not initiate "phase two" of modern warfare, the "proof phase," during which strength is overtly applied, unless and until they have won phase one, the "decision phase," the phase we are in now. They have not as yet won the decisive phase. The reason is obvious—they have not won the struggle for airpower ascendancy. We have the strength to deter them. Today, we have the ability to win the airpower battle. So today, we are achieving our national aim—we are preventing shooting war by possessing enough superiority that we are clearly ahead in the current cold war.

The important thing to remember is that if we do, in fact, possess the power to deter, it is only because we clearly possess the strength to win—the strength to win the airpower battle and through it, the war.

In our national effort to preserve the peace, we must give the strongest support in every way possible to the efforts of our President and our statesmen to find a peaceful solution to the problem facing us; and we have to consider war as an unacceptable alternative to the free world except as a matter of survival. But as strength seems to be our best hope for maintaining peace, we must never allow our military strength to fall below that level where it no longer meet the enemy threat. I realize that Soviet military power has many facets, can be applied in many places and in a number of ways. However, the threat to which I refer is the ultimate threat—the one that effects our survival as a nation, and the survival of the free world. That ultimate threat is the growing Soviet capability to launch a massive nuclear assault against the free world.

We must keep the Soviet convinced he cannot win so he will not be tempted to employ his threat. If we possess the ability to deliver massive nuclear air offensive retaliation against him, I believe we can do it. Strengths short of massive capability may deter threats less than all-out nuclear assault. But nothing short of this will deter the ultimate threat, and lesser threats as well.

The foregoing examines the threat of war that faces us as a nation, and defines the nature of warfare in today's world. The role of the Strategic Air Command in preserving the peace by meeting this threat can be simply stated.

The Strategic Air Command is the repository of the bulk of the strategic air striking power of the United States and of the free world. It is a force "in being," trained to the point where it can do its job accurately and effectively. It is, today, sufficiently large to make the effect of its employment unacceptable to the would-be aggressor. As a result, SAC is now fighting phase one, the "decisive phase," of today's war, and is contributing to winning it.

The strength of the Strategic Air Command will be responsive to the threat of war as long as it continues to be victorious in the continuing struggle for airpower ascendancy. Given the basic tools required, SAC will continue to do its part in preserving the peace.