

# U. S. IDEALS VS. NUCLEAR CONCEPTS

By

**LtCol J. F. Donahoe, Jr.**

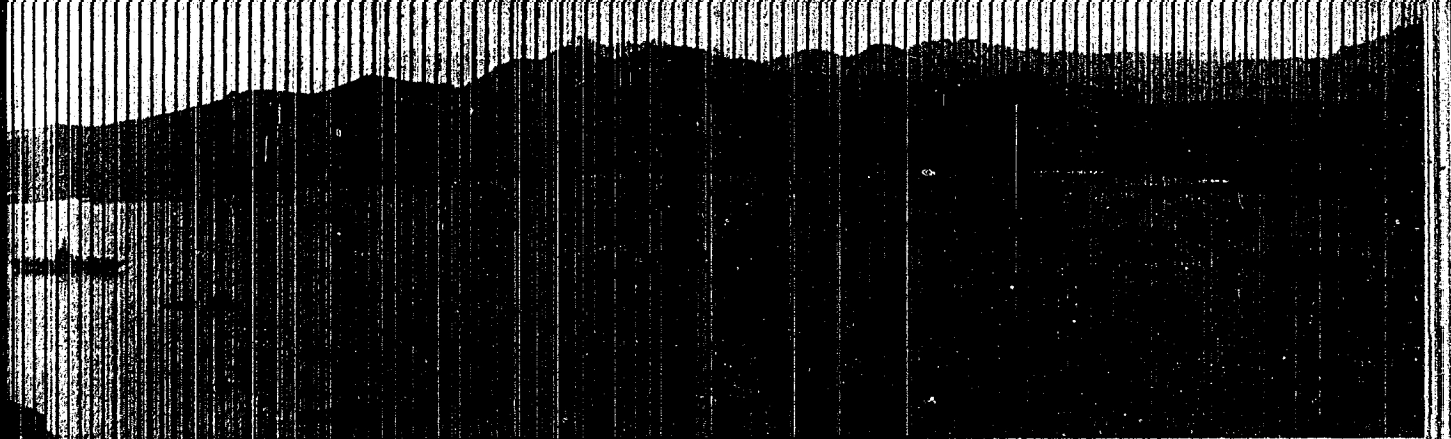
RECENTLY, THERE HAS BEEN EVIDENCE of the beginnings of another "great debate" in relation to national defense. Such debates are no novelty, but rather a healthy aspect of the form of government that relies upon the public forum instead of the secret chamber in shaping the affairs of state. In the area of national defense, for example, the years of 1946 and 1947 witnessed the unification debate which culminated in the National Security Act that, with subsequent modifications, gave us the present Department of Defense. The public press dubbed a 1949 defense debate the "Revolt of the Admirals" and called one in the spring of 1956 the "Revolt of the Colonels." Shortly thereafter, a Senate sub-committee investigated the adequacy of Defense Department planning and procurement in development of the Strategic Air Command.

Indications are that new debate may be centered on even more basic

concepts than those of size, roles and missions which have been the previous focal points, but that elements of each previous debate will be present. A new concept is reported under discussion which contemplates replacing men with the instruments of war to the extent that over-all armed forces strength may be reduced as much as 25 per cent by 1960. It is linked to the present capability for massive retaliation embodied in the SAC's B-52, and it envisions the obsolescence of this formidable weapon as the ICBM becomes a reality. It further assumes that withdrawal of US troops from foreign lands will be accelerated as other more efficient atomic and thermonuclear weapons become operational.

Along with weapons progress, the development of nuclear power has been demonstrated by the nuclear powered submarine *Nautilus* in steaming 50,000 miles without refueling. If that is possible, how would nuclear power plants change the operational capability of surface craft—both combatant and logistic? Propulsion should be equally effective and, therefore, a far more mobile fleet could be evolved as dependence upon the supply train is lessened, if not eliminated. The concept of the fast carrier striking force is enhanced in direct proportion to its increase in mobility—the ideal for which such a force strives.

Naturally, the employment of nuclear weapons by all of these delivery systems (B-52, ICBM and carrier forces) is to be inferred. So also is (with greater aircraft and guided missile ranges and the greater fleet mobility) a withdrawal of US forces to "Fortress America"—one name given to this proposal.



The "Fortress America" idea has appeared in various forms during the years of US development as a world power. It has found favor because the basic sympathies of a large segment of our population have traditionally been isolationist. For example, President Woodrow Wilson learned this as he attempted to find support for US participation in the League of Nations after WW I, only to be repudiated by the Congress. (Certain historians point to this withdrawal as a significant contribution to the beginnings of WW II.) And, both the late Senator Robert Taft and ex-President Herbert Hoover again recommended such a move as recently as 1952.

With the new ranges and greater mobility, it might well be argued we do not become isolationists by retracting our forces into a "Fortress America." We can move rapidly and retaliate massively with weapons and at a time and place of our own choosing. Militarily, the concept of "Fortress America" is sound. It permits concentration of forces mainly within the continental US, and such concentration is militarily far more desirable than "piecemeal" deployment in a ring of containment surrounding the Communist world. Too, this concentration has as its corollary "economy of force," and a significant reduction in size becomes feasible. Thus, the published features of the "Fortress America" concept. In this concept, each NATO nation becomes responsible for its own defense and the present US forces on the ground will be re-

placed by the nation's own troops. Our great nuclear power becomes their main support.

While this may be *militarily* sound, there are certain blind spots in such a concept. It is held that modern war (and the present "cold war" is evidence) is not only military, but also diplomatic, psychological and economic in nature. In fact, military action is usually withheld until the other phases have been fully exploited. The co-ordinated employment of the non-military phases with the threat, or use, of military power of a nation is termed national strategy. National strategy supports national policy. National policy is the guideline for courses of action to attain ends that further a nation's own best interests.

The question becomes, therefore, in the present world situation, is the US military evacuation of NATO nations under consideration sound from the standpoints of national policy and national strategy, including possible military action?

*Unless modified, or unless unpublicized features are present, the answer is: "No!"*

It is the intent, here, to present conditions under which such a proposal, somewhat modified, might be sound; and, in broad terms, to discuss methods for implementation, using modern technology to the utmost, *yet still keeping faith with the ideals of western civilization.* It is basic to these suggestions that our national policy must foster and enhance these western ideals because their world-wide acceptance is in

our own best interests.

Turn back the clock to WWII. A world watched Hitler, in quest of *Lebensraum*, expand Germany into a vast European Nazi state through bloodless conquest until he attacked Poland. France and England declared war, but it was called a "phony war" because they did not have the capability to interfere with Hitler's plan. After Poland was conquered, Hitler occupied Norway, then turned west and south; France and the Low Countries fell; the British got out by the skin of their teeth from Dunkirk and 4 years were needed to prepare the mightiest war machine the world had ever seen to reclaim the nations that had thus been lost. Hitler's success, militarily, has been credited, on one hand, to his audacity and the effectiveness of a completely rebuilt war machine; and, on the other hand, to his realization that effective co-operation would not exist among the threatened nations and that piecemeal aggrandizement of territory would be possible. In short, he employed force and the threat of force boldly in a succession of military vacuums and nearly achieved his objective.

Today the potential enemy is not Hitler, but Russia. Whether we call it "cold war" or "competitive co-existence" we are in a struggle (bloodless, at present) with Russia. This struggle is one between two great groups of nations with the widest possible divergence in cultures and ideals. Our economic supremacy and our national re-

**A military capability for nuclear warfare alone jeopardizes the ideals it is designed to protect.**

**We must exploit the mobility of the balanced fleet with its inherent landing elements**

sources have thrust upon us the leadership of the Western nations—nations that, in general, believe in the ideals expressed in our own Constitution; in the inherent dignity of the individual human. His rights to build a better life and to be governed by a government of his own choice are parts of this dignity. Facing us is a culture based upon the supremacy of the state, where too many witnesses can give only silent testimony to its ruthlessness.

If we retract from NATO footholds into a "Fortress America"—which maintains its strength only from nuclear potential—what will happen to these Western nations who are our philosophical and psychological allies in the "cold war?"

If we promise to support them with atomic or thermonuclear weapons in the event of war, do we not limit ourselves to only one possible course of action?

And what would be the overt act that would commit this support?

Where and when would be the time and place of our choosing?

Assume that all NATO forces except a newly constituted West German Army are withdrawn from Germany. Could this (proposed) 12 division, 500,000-man army withstand an invasion by East German forces? Assume that the East Germans would use only "conventional" non-atomic weapons and that their forces would be augmented by Russian volunteers, just as the NKPA found aid from UCF volunteers in Korea. How soon would a "United Germany" disappear behind the "Iron Curtain?" What of our commitments to support and retaliate?

How? . . . Nuclear? . . . Where?

Particularly in West Germany, such an attack would also cause heavy casualties among our psychological allies. How long would they remain allies?

The Russian homeland itself? Thus giving Russia the opportunity to show the world that we are the imperialistic war mongers that Moscow has said we were—and worse, that we have rained death and destruction upon a "helpless people?" The "day of infamy" that was Pearl Harbor would fade into insignificance in the propaganda onslaught alone if we followed such a course. Where would the sympathy of

Nehru's India and the "neutrals" of the world lie as a result?

And, with group "purges" and individual political eliminations or "suicides" as witness to the Russian disregard for human dignity and rights, what restraint would exist to prevent their pursuit of action calculated to invite our only capability—nuclear action? To them, it might be expedient and, in the past, expediency has been the only yardstick used in measurement of means to their ends.

Even further, the use of nuclear or atomic weapons should be carefully scrutinized on two major and related issues: the moral and the practical.

The practical: Just as we have known "counterbattery" in the past, the logical development, once the first atomic weapon is employed, will be "atomic counterbattery" in ascending caliber until both sides have passed the range of atomic cannon or tactical guided missiles. Then, high performance aircraft assume the mission. In turn, we are led to the ultimate employment of strategic aircraft with thermonuclear weapons. Serious scientists, speaking in complete objectivity, have said that when that starts "this world will have had it!"

The moral: The Western ideal of individual human dignity has its moral and ethical roots in Judean-Christian culture and traditions. Under this culture, use of force in self defense against an aggressor is justifiable if a clear and present danger exists and is recognized; but the force to be employed is limited to that sufficient to subdue the aggressor; license is not granted to employ force overwhelming in proportion to that of the aggressor. (As a simple, pre-atomic example, in the "winning of the west" as we learned it on Saturday afternoons in our local Bijous, it was not enough that the "bad guy" was armed. He had

to draw before Tom Mix, Tim McCoy, Buck Jones and the rest of the "good guys" could go for their guns. The evil capability of the "bad guy" was not enough—his intention had to show clearly. And, always, it seemed, the "good guys" had weapons of only the same or lesser caliber.)

Before Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the A-bomb was an uncertain weapon, and deliberations in serious counsel resolved it to be usable. Now, the uncertainty of A and H bombs has been eliminated. Can we then use such weapons first—that is, can we use them first and still pretend national and strategic policies consonant with the morality and ideals which those policies supposedly further? Naturally, should an enemy use them first, we should have no qualms, moral or otherwise, in using them in retaliation. Our previous practical experience with counterbattery techniques probably justifies the immediate retaliation with H bombs to enemy use of tactical atomic hand grenades, if there are such things, for we must anticipate and prevent his counterbattery reactions once "the weapons" are employed. Further, his full capability has become a recognizable intention through his entry into nuclear action.

Returning to our hypothetical case, would not retraction from Germany and reliance upon nuclear weapons alone create the same sort of military power vacuum that Hitler exploited? A vacuum inviting entrance. Then, would our dilemma be: massive retaliation or none?

Our decision could throw us into a moral and psychological abyss that would cost us our ultimate objective as the price of military victory. There are still groups of philosophical and psychological allies on the other side of the Iron Curtain. The East Berlin riots in 1953, the June 1956 demonstrations in Poznan and

---

**LtCol Donahoe**, just finishing a tour with the NROTC at Holy Cross, is enroute to Senior School. He wrote: "I was prompted to write this because I personally believe that Russia would have liked to provoke atomic action by the U.S. forces in Korea in order that she could have propagandized the entire Oriental world with the accusation that the US would use nuclear weapons against only Asians (i.e., as against Japan in WWII). From that it was only one step to the hypothesis of how they could exploit similar US nuclear action in Europe, and thence to what alternatives to nuclear war should we consider? To me, the moral and ideological considerations are paramount, and nuclear war must be viewed in the light of what those considerations dictate."

the recent Hungarian uprising have shown us that. But, would Poznans and Budapests of tomorrow rise once nuclear weapons have been employed? There is a significant difference between nuclear and non-nuclear war. It could be the difference between the rioter who now says: "I shall risk death to resist the Russian tank with sticks and stones so that my family and descendants can be free of this yoke!" and the one who *could not say*: "Though my wife and children will perish in the holocaust that follows, I will still resist the Russians!"

Ruling out, except in retaliation, the nuclear weapons, what about the use of conventional weapons in the restoration of West Germany? If the East Germans have been successful in consolidating all of West Germany, and "de facto" recognition is granted by any nation, or full recognition is granted by Russia, do we not have a situation analogous to Korea and the inviolability of the Yalu boundary? Or, recalling the 1 year of preparation between Dunkirk and the Normandy beaches, is that the course to which we would commit ourselves. Such a prospect would invite additional moves into similar vacuums while we prepared, and time would act to the Russian advantage.

But there is an alternative. One that would use modern technology to the maximum advantage, retain the deterrent threat against nuclear or conventional warfare, support allies in a manner consistent with our national ideals, and still permit reduction in our armed forces.

The West German hypothesis continues; however, the general outline should be valid in any critical area. West Germany builds up armed forces for her own defense to the point that meets treaty requirements and that she can financially bear. As she builds, the US withdraws until no "foreign forces" are on German soil. In effect, Germany becomes a Western nations' strong point, a fixed position to be held at all costs, and an outpost guarding approaches to "Fortress America." But fixed positions, tactically speaking, are unsound without mutual support and observation from other fixed positions. Strategically, the same generalities apply. Strategic



***Nuclear power can untie the fleet from a complex supply system***

lines of communication are the equivalent of tactical patrol routes. We *can* withdraw our ground forces from Europe—if we can return in good order and in sufficient time to support those positions which must be held. We must keep our lines of communication (patrol routes) open.

The advent of nuclear power can significantly untie the fleet, combatant and transport, from a complex logistical resupply system. Much as the Sixth Fleet now operates in the Mediterranean, another fleet could range the Atlantic, the Channel and the North Sea—from Gibraltar to Norway—as our mobile patrol force. It would be a fleet capable of swift striking action from its fast carrier components, one which contains its own air defense and antisubmarine elements, and, in addition, one which contains the *Thetis Bay*-type CVHAs and transport elements essential to the lift of a 3-division amphibious corps. The concept of NATO would change. "Fortress America" would become the base from which this huge mobile patrol operates. Opening of hostilities would signal the initiation of a 3-phase counteroperation:

Phase I—"Delay" phase. Nation attacked trades space for time in order to assure success of Phase II. Tactical air support from the US fleet available.

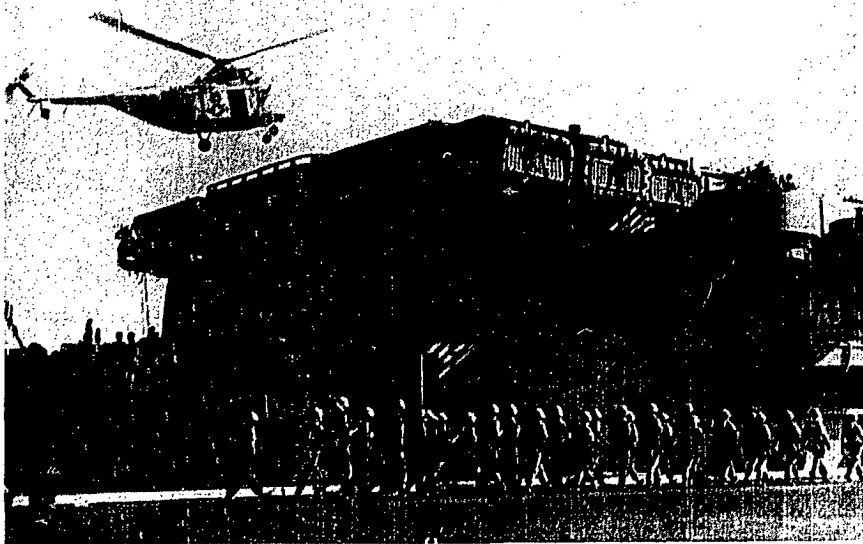
Phase II—"Blunting" phase. Seaborne US amphibious corps joins nationals to reduce impetus of attack to zero. Joint forces establish force beach head line to permit build up for Phase III.

Phase III—Counteroffensive phase. US and allies mass and attack to re-

store boundaries.

In Phase I, the mission of each NATO nation would be to delay, deceive and disorganize (the classic outpost mission) and to force full deployment of the invader. Should an invasion commence, our powerful fleet, using pre-arranged code plans, and already seaborne, would move to the theater of operations. National army retirement plans would be based primarily upon consolidating and telescoping their perimeter into a littoral where a natural force beach head line exists. Fleet air support would be available during this phase. The optimum result, assuming enemy superiority that forces retirement, is that the retirement would be deliberate enough to permit unopposed landing of US forces for Phase II. Short of this optimum, the "new concept" US Marine helicopter assault forces would move directly to the planned and predetermined FBHL to cover the withdrawal of the NATO ally's forces. Having withdrawn within the FBHL perimeter, they would strengthen and consolidate this FBHL to be held "at all costs." The area encompassed would permit administrative landings of forces sufficient to mount a counteroffensive to repulse the invader without the necessity for an amphibious assault. (Considering economy alone, it would be absurd to compare the ease and rapidity with which forces may land upon friendly ground to the problems involved in an amphibious assault against enemy held territory.)

Without an exhaustive analysis of all intelligence factors affecting each



*The Helicopter Assault Forces—a primary element in US power . . .*

possible theater, the proposal of a 3-division amphibious corps as the required force is obviously suspect. It is not the purpose here to deal in such specifics. However, on the critical D-day in Normandy, SHAEF put ashore 8 divisions in an opposed landing. Thus, the immediate commitment of an intact amphibious corps and the addition of retiring national forces in organization of the FBHL would appear to approximate the strength sufficient to accomplish the Phase II objective of blunting the attack and setting the stage for Phase III. Phase III would, in this hypothetical case, take place much as the "Breakout from St. Lo" occurred when sufficient strength had been massed.

At this point, close examination must be made of the weapons intended for use of this mobile force. The assumption that has been incorporated into the US Marine Corps "new concept" of vertical envelopments and extremely mobile helicopter assault forces is that tactical atomic weapons will be in the hands of the troops. Realizing that such assumptions and concepts are not developed without greatly detailed studies, analyses and evaluations, the question remains: Must we not guard against letting that assumption become so accepted in

our thinking that we neglect development of methods for waging "conventional" warfare? Admittedly, it would require unheard of unanimity of national opinion to allow US forces to withhold any weapon available if American lives are being lost in efforts to aid any ally. Yet, if a situation such as this should occur, a world, half-free and half-slave, will be watching! If the enemy uses nuclear weapons first, naturally, retaliate. But until then we must hold hope alive in the slave world for relief from that oppression which denies human dignity and creates a slave responsible to the state. Tomorrow's Budapests hold the hope that human dignity can be regained—not that they and their children, if they survive, will be reduced to slobbering sub-humans grubbing for existence in a devastation brought about by their yearnings for freedom. And the presently Free World, if we can withhold the nuclear weapons, will have visible evidence that we practice what we preach. Thus we would strengthen the moral fibers that bind it with us.

The most modern conventional weapons, coupled with modern technology applied to transportation and other logistic problems, will permit significant reductions in the size of our Armed Forces. A seaborne force

would have that mobility that would allow us to halve requirements for US forces landlocked in one nation or another. The capability of moving a corps into either France or Germany would relieve us of the requirement of keeping a corps in each.

Moreover, in time-space factors, helicopter assault forces and other elements of this mobile amphibious corps would be no further away from the theater of operations than the potential enemy. Thus, the deterrent effect of a "force-in-being" would not be lost, and in fact, the type of deterrent that did not exist before the Korean action would be present.

The diplomatic/psychological effect of a ready US force would act to the best interests of the US by bolstering the national morale of its allies while eliminating the allegedly detrimental effect upon diplomatic relations of permanently based US forces in foreign lands. The "thorn in the side" would be removed. As the defense plans were developed in each nation, CPXs and full scale rehearsals of the Phase II part of each code plan (joint amphibious force—national army establishment of the FBHL) could be conducted. This might call for a 15-day exercise followed by 7 days of critique. US units during this period would gain the psychological effect often referred to as "showing the flag," but the reaction of the populace toward them would be more as it is to tourists or "visiting firemen," than as to the "men who came to dinner." (Present evidence is that the American tourist has been a most welcome visitor in these lands.) US personnel permanently stationed in NATO nations would be reduced to essential liaison groups working with various nations' field commands and perhaps some US exchange students in the military/ naval schools of each country.

This is ambitious thinking, but we do have the prototype command in the Sixth Fleet. Through its operation, we have gained invaluable experience in making such a concept possible.

Conversion or new construction of combatant and transport fleet elements with nuclear propulsion will be costly. The development of

this mobile force must naturally be adjusted to our economic capacity. It would serve nothing if we bankrupt ourselves in our efforts. But it can be phased with troop withdrawal so that the sum of our immediate capability for NATO action remains constant. A vacuum, no matter how temporary, *must* be avoided.

The exact composition of the floating mobile force in strength and weapons would be subject to close scrutiny. It would need both conventional and nuclear capability. The guided missiles, artillery and other new weapons in various stages of development will use both nuclear and non-nuclear warheads, so the warhead used will not unduly affect the training of troops.

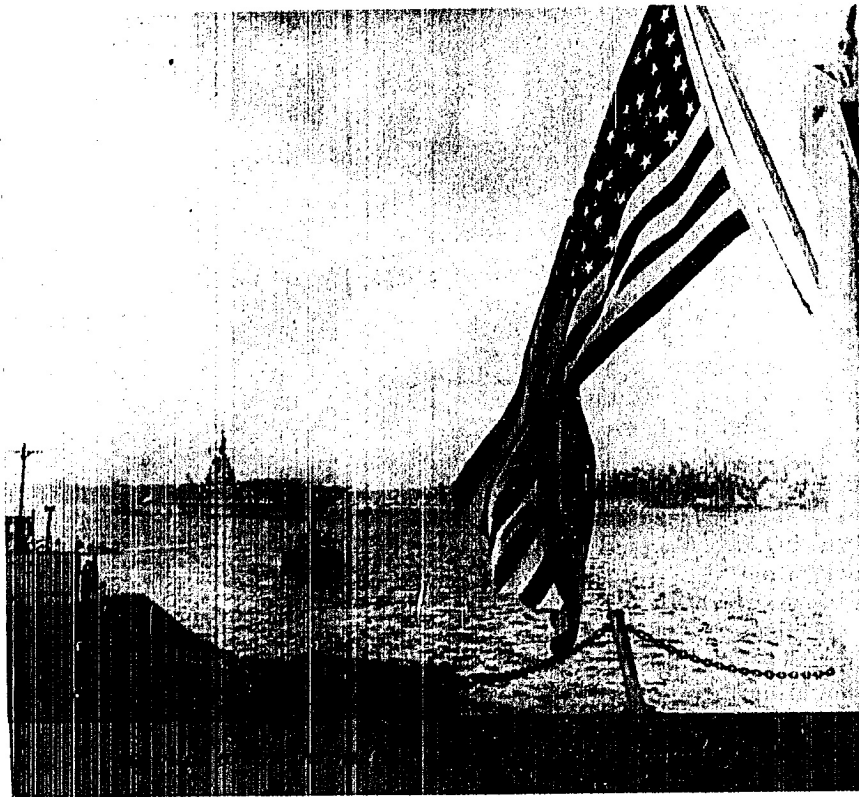
The percentage of the force actually at sea or engaged in the proposed CPXs and rehearsals and that which is US based, but poised and ready for immediate movement to the threatened area, may vary. Adverse indications would obviously put a greater force to sea. As tensions relax, the seaborne force could be diminished, but its units so disposed at stations and bases that the capability exists for *immediate* assembly and movement to augment the immobile force. A "moth-balled" fleet requiring 30 days' preparation, or under-strength troop units with material shortages or training deficiencies would not have this *immediate* capability.

Training and plans for employment of this mobile force must respect enemy nuclear capability; primarily in regard to fleet and troop dispersion, evasive action and defense against attack and must retain the capability for immediate tactical retaliation. Invariably, our post WW II training exercises have assumed that enemy capability.

The landing force mission will be to hold, at all costs, the terrain necessary to insure administrative landing of the forces required for Phase III—restoration of previously existing boundaries.

Present roles and missions of the Armed Forces appear to remain valid. Keeping the sea lanes open has always been a naval responsibility. They are open if we can unobstructedly bring forces ashore in Europe.

The Marine Corps responsibilities for development of tactics, tech-



niques and equipment to be employed by landing forces and for the organization of Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms would continue. Revisions in force composition would occur as new organizations and new tactical concepts are made possible by new weapons; nevertheless, operational readiness would be at a constant peak of efficiency because of previous Navy-Marine Corps experiences in years of "balanced fleet" development.

The Army responsibility for sustained land operations naturally indicates its mission in the main effort of Phase III. In Phase II, the defended terrain would include both ports for seaborne delivery of Phase III forces and air fields permitting their airborne arrival.

The Air Force's SAC deterrent threat would be most persuasive in keeping the war "localized" and non-nuclear. Its Tactical Air Command would support the Phase III counter-offensive.

In summary: in our own best interests we cannot permit the existence of military power vacuums among our allies that would invite aggression by Russia or its satellites. We can prevent such vacuums and still reduce the required number of troops if we will *exploit to the fullest the mobility and staying power of a*

*powerful fleet*—a modern, balanced fleet, relieved of many logistic problems by nuclear propulsion, and a fleet whose landing elements, in themselves, also possess the ultimate degree of mobility.

Further, through an adherence to ethical and moral principles in the selection of armament and weapons for that fleet, backed by the practical deterrent force of a nuclear weapon SAC, we can, if war comes, attempt to keep the war localized. We can stand firm in the defense of the Free World and still let the conduct of operations bear witness to the principles for which we stand, and for which we are willing to fight. Our ultimate end in conflict is not merely military victory. Military action is but another means employed when efforts short of war have failed to serve our own best interests. Our aim is to serve our best interests by making the world realize that national ideals which respect human dignity are practical and attainable. That aim is what our national policy and national strategy, including military action, must support. A military capability for *nuclear warfare alone* does not adequately render that support because it jeopardizes—even invites compromise of—the ideals it is designed to protect.

US MC