

# Sticks,

# Stones

# &

# Atoms

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By James Burnham

NOT LONG AGO AFTER THE UNITED NATIONS PATCH-work expeditionary force was rushed—or, perhaps better, sucked—into the Congolese maelstrom, a striking news photograph was widely printed in the American press. It showed a truckload of soldiers about to start off for the Léopoldville suburbs. The men were part of a crack, British-trained unit of the Ghana army.

As displayed in the picture, they were standing at attention in the truck, in two close smartly drawn ranks. Suspended from the left arm of each soldier was a round shield, looking as if it had been snatched from a museum's medieval armor collection or from the prop room of a grand-opera company.

A friend of mine, an able and hardworking officer now at the Pentagon, noticed this picture and smiled. "The Sir Galahad weapon system! How's that for defensive armament in the nuclear age?" he asked sarcastically. He was much surprised when I commented: "It's not too bad, as a matter of fact. Better than most."

In these Ghanaian shields, a light, strong aluminum alloy has replaced the wood, leather, brass, and iron of ancient bucklers. Their purpose is protection against the sticks, rocks, and stones thrown by rioting mobs. In the nuclear age, stones function as weapons a good deal oftener than nuclear bombs—and have won many more battles.

On both sides of the Iron Curtain many strategists believe that a curious law applies to the quantum jumps in firepower that have marked the weapons development of the past two decades. Beyond a certain limit—already passed by H-bombs—the more powerful the weapons become the less chance there is that they will

be used. The reason for this is that fewer and fewer occasions would be taken to justify their use.

This is true even if one side had a monopoly. You are not going to start throwing H-bombs around to halt a border skirmish in the Cameroons or to block a change of government in Paraguay. When both sides possess the superpowerful weapons, the appropriate occasions are reduced to the brink of zero.

Indeed, many analysts are convinced that the only event that would be taken by either side as a sufficient motive for launching the most powerful weapons would be an attack with such weapons by the *other* side. If this puzzling conclusion is true, then an all-out unlimited war can take place *only* through faulty intelligence or an accidental launching.

## Hurl an Invective, Not a Nuke

In practice there seems to be a still more paradoxical corollary to this law of the inverse relation between the power and use of modern weapons. The more powerful the new weapons that *exist*, the more primitive the weapons that are actually *used*. Castro conquered Cuba with small arms, mimeograph machines, and portable radio transmitters.

The rioting mobs of Tokyo, Seoul, and Ankara that overturned governments and forced the cancellation of the visit of the head of the most powerful nation in the world were armed with nothing more than their fists, the staves used to raise their placards, and paving bricks, plus a few knives and revolvers. In the Congo, we have gone back to clubs, rocks, blow guns, and magical spells.

It is terribly hard for Americans to understand some-



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thing so simple. In uniform and out, we have been dutifully trying to learn about grandiose "weapons systems" made up of infinitely complex aircraft, bases, carriers, nuclear devices, ballistic missiles, nuclear submarines, electronic computers, inertial navigators, and what not.

On a single system of this sort—for example, Polaris, Titan, Minuteman, or the B-52 complex—we are ready to spend five, eight, or ten billions of dollars as well as immense quantities of manpower, effort, technical ingenuity, and scientific intelligence.

It is well and good and necessary that this should be. But at the same time we seem to have difficulty in focusing our attention, not to speak of our brains and dollars, on the weapons systems by which the struggle for the world is in fact being fought.

We should more frequently remind ourselves that only two nuclear devices—crude, relatively low-power types at that—have ever been used for combat purposes. In the fifteen years since that parenthetic employment there have been many victories and defeats vast in scope and lasting in consequences. Power over many nations,

whole regions of the earth, hundreds of millions of human beings, has changed hands—all without benefit of direct nuclear leverage.

Those rioting mobs of Tokyo, Seoul, and Ankara needed no A- or H-bombs, or planes or tanks or even guns to topple governments. Gandhi and Nehru had no strategic air force to help them drive the British Raj out of the Indian subcontinent.

Indonesia, Iraq, Cuba, Bolivia, Egypt, Guatemala, Vietnam, Cambodia, the Congo, the Rhodesias. . . . It is mostly sticks and stones, rifles and submachine guns—and the mobs of course: the mobs are a primary element of the weapons systems that have been deciding most battles and campaigns of the struggle for the world.

Words also, of course—the words of agitation and propaganda, zeroed in on minds—for in these battles of our age, unlike the old nursery rhyme, words as well as sticks and stones can break our bones.

From 1945 until some time after 1950 we possessed a monopoly in operative nuclear arms and thus overwhelming superiority in over-all firepower. But it is in those same years that our enemy made his greatest con-

"How's that for defensive armament in the nuclear age?" a Pentagon officer scoffed when he saw the primitive weapons of the Ghang soldiers in the photo above. ("Not bad," says the author—and he says why



Wide World

**Expensive weapons are no good against a mob like this, but the mobs have been winning all the battles**

quests since 1917, seizing eastern Europe, with 100 million inhabitants, and mainland China, with 600 million.

The weapons systems that he employed for these achievements were based, not on physical firepower, but on psychological and political warfare methods, both defensive and offensive.

Defensively, it was necessary for him to counteract, negate, and sterilize our nuclear capability. Communist reasoning never forgets that a weapon—any weapon—is only a powerless bundle of matter apart from human minds and wills.

#### **Shoot at the Minds and Wills**

The biggest bomb ever built or building is less than David's slingshot without a mind and will and arm able and ready to use it.

With atomic capability added to our force already in being in 1945, we were in a position, materially speaking, to enforce our views, to reduce the Soviet threat to manageable proportions, and thus to guarantee for a reasonable future both national security and world peace. This possibility conflicted with the Communist objective of world domination, so the Communists struck back, hard, brilliantly, and successfully. The main impetus of their strike was directed against the minds and wills of men.

Their agents, dupes, and ideas were already present in many strata of American life, including scientific circles, the institutions that affect public opinion, and certain of the agencies of government. They were thus in a posi-

tion from the very beginning to counteract our nuclear projects and capability—from the inside as well as through external pressures and diplomacy.

The main thrust of the first Communist reply to our nuclear weapons monopoly was thus psychopolitical, against the minds of the men who were making the weapons (technicians and scientists) and the men who controlled it (the leaders of government and public opinion).

The Communist objective was to deprive the United States of the political benefit of its nuclear capability, to "denature" the bombs, not by the physical process described in the textbooks, but by political, psychological, and moral means. In this case, as more generally, the Communists acted to confuse and disorient their enemy, to entangle him in contradictory policies, and to destroy his will to resist.

Under this defensive psychic screen, which successfully counterweighed their enemy's material superiority, the Communists went ahead systematically with the phased subjugation of the east European nations. At the same time, in a theater still more vast, they carried through the conquest of mainland China and its absorption into an expanded Soviet Empire.

Although there was, of course, fighting, some of it rather large-scale, the China campaign was essentially a political-warfare operation. (I am using the term "political warfare" in its most general sense, as covering all types of agitation, propaganda, subversion, economic manipulation, rioting, terror, diversionary diplomacy,

guerrilla and paramilitary actions, etc.: everything, in sum, short of the employment of the main formal armed forces.)

The Communists' polwar campaign for the conquest of China opened in 1920. It was completed in 1949 without the mass intervention of the main armed forces and with a total expenditure of probably less than half a billion dollars.

Although most professional military men, unlike their civilian counterparts, know that we are in a fight, I get the impression that very few of them can take a weapon system seriously unless it comprises a lot of firepower. They can analyze learnedly the merits of strategic manned bombers vs. submarine-carried Polaris vs. railroad-borne Minutemen.

They will thoughtfully debate the role of conventional limited-warfare forces. They can envisage, without qualms, spending ten or twenty billion dollars to develop weapon systems based on one or another or all of these concepts, together with the assignment of personnel and time and resources that go with money of that order.

But if you suggest—as I have often done in lectures at the various war colleges—spending any such sum, or a tenth such a sum, for systems based on Blanquist cadres, crowd manipulation, guerrillas, psychological warfare, paramilitary operations, subversion, bribery, infiltration, with specialized, mobile, ranger-type units in active supporting reserve—in short, if you suggest all-out political warfare (polwar)—the best response you can ordinarily hope for is a skeptical smile.

*Yet it is the polwar weapons systems that have been winning all the battles.* What good are Atlas and Polaris in Laos, Cuba, Algeria, the Congo, or in the swarming streets of Tokyo, Ankara, Jakarta, and Budapest?

It has been demonstrated over and again in the past fifteen years—indeed, since 1917—that modern polwar systems can smash governments and armies, and take over territory, peoples, and nations. Isn't a weapon system that can defeat the British, Dutch, and French armies, that can seize Czechoslovakia, China, and Cuba, worth spending a few billions on? The real worth of any weapon system, in the last analysis, should be measured by what it can accomplish, not by its size, complexity, cost, or physical firepower.

### The Objective is Power

Naturally I am not suggesting that a polwar system should operate in a military vacuum. B-52's, Atlas and Polaris missiles are not being used, but the fact that they might be is a solid foundation for every kind of conflict operation. And effective limited-warfare arms, present always as a threat and ready for appropriate use, naturally strengthen any sort of political-warfare campaign.

A conflict apparatus adapted to the mid-twentieth century struggle for the world consists of three primary forces, elements, or arms:

1. The massive retaliatory ("deterrent") force, which remains the ultimate reserve.
2. The mobile, limited-warfare ("brush-fire") force. This, too, remains normally in reserve but in more active posture than the retaliatory force, ready for quick

Firepower is not the answer in the war of the two ideologies. Wordpower incites the mobs who win all the battles in "Polwar"



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Swedish soldiers with UN forces in the Congo used primitive but practical armor—shields and clubs

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intervention in any area where security or interest requires the direct presence or use of military power.

3. The political-warfare force. This force—which by its nature includes a multitude of activities and agencies, both governmental and civilian—is the active vanguard. Under the shield of the retaliatory force, and backed up by the limited-warfare force, with which it collaborates, the polwar force continuously engages in the day-by-day operations of the protracted conflict.

True political warfare, as understood and practiced by our enemy, is not mere rivalry or competition or conflict of some vague kind. Political warfare is a form of war. It is strategic in nature. Its objective, like that of every other form of war, is to impose one's own will on the opponent, to destroy the opponent's will to resist. In simplest terms, it aims to *conquer* the opponent.

Within the frame of that general objective, the specific objective of each specific polwar campaign is always defined in terms of *power*. The purpose in conducting polwar operations is always to increase one's power in some definite way or to decrease the power of the opponent. In either case, positive or negative, the aim is to alter the power equilibrium in one's favor.

The power objective may be grandiose—conquest of a nation, disintegration of an empire; or the minor takeover of a trade union, scaring a parliament into defeating a bill, or the sabotage of a factory. But whether big or small, the objective is always power.

These are the principles in terms of which our enemy has planned and mounted his polwar operations since the summer of 1903 when, through the founding of the

Bolshevik faction, he launched his enterprise for the conquest of the world. Moreover, although he realizes that polwar in some instances may not be able by itself to reach a decision and may have to be supplemented by full-scale military measures, he is convinced that in at least some cases political warfare alone *can* bring the decision.

By now he has ample evidence to support this belief. Czechoslovakia has been conquered twice in this century—once by Hitler and once by Stalin—by a purely polwar campaign, without the commitment of major armed forces. China also, as we have noted, was won essentially by polwar methods. By these same methods American nuclear testing has been stopped dead for more than two critical years.

Not a year passes but that these methods do not smash several governments. And right now they are swinging an island at our strategic doorstep into our enemy's power system.

Although we are in fact spending several billion dollars yearly on nonmilitary phases of the cold war, very few of these go for what can properly be called "political warfare" in the true sense—the sense accepted by our enemy. Our professional military leaders have traditionally regarded political warfare (or "psychological warfare," as it is more usually and inadequately termed), as being merely an auxiliary and relatively minor supplement to military operation.

The cold-war activities of nonmilitary agencies—"foreign aid," "truth (or information) campaigns," "student (or cultural) exchange," even much of the clandestine



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Mob action has played a big role in overthrowing eight governments friendly to US in last two years

activity of CIA—are for the most part not true polwar operations. They are not political warfare because we do not really think of them as literally *war*.

We are trying to get the better of a competitor and opponent, certainly; to block certain of his moves, divert others, influence him to make certain changes in his behavior and policies. But we are not trying to impose our will on him in any general way, and certainly we are not trying to defeat him.

#### Foreign Aid Only a Key

In other words, we do not conceive our cold-war operations *strategically*. Often they have no clearly defined objective at all. When they do have an objective, this is seldom understood in terms of power.

In a genuine polwar system, foreign aid is only a key to open a national door for the conduct of field operations; information and propaganda are not a school to teach pale truths about how nice one is, but a psychological weapon to undermine, divert, and injure one's enemy; student scholarships are not a charity handout to the needy, but a cover for training activist cadres.

Because we decline to fight genuine, strategically conceived political warfare, a considerable part of our billions in foreign-aid dollars has been wasted, squandered on useless projects, filtered into the pockets of corrupt local residents, or used to build up industry for the enemy or his friends to inherit.

Let me point the contrast by returning in conclusion to the specific matter of riots and mob action, bearing in mind that this is only one of a hundred polwar fields. How many men and women (women are exceedingly important in crowd management) do we have in training today for the mission of exploiting crowds, mobs, and street riots to our political advantage? Do we have *any*?

How many persons in the agencies of our Government have ever made a thorough study of the historical, psychological, and technical problems of handling mobs and mass riots? Is there even a single one?

The Bolshevik approach to mobs, riots, and "command of the streets" is very serious indeed. In his design for the revolutionary party—the conflict apparatus—Lenin, like Bakunin and Nechaev before him, incorporated the ideas of Louis Blanqui, a French revolutionist who lived from 1805 to 1881. Blanqui first became prominent in the 1830 revolution and devoted the rest of his life, in and out of prison, to revolutionary conspiracy.

He believed that the key to successful revolt was the development of a small, secret "cadre" organization. Normally the cadres would remain underground, abstaining from political affairs. They were to be trained in the manipulation of crowds and the use of small arms and improvised weapons (sticks and stones) accessible to crowds.

In the 1848 and 1870 revolutions in France, the practical cogency of Blanqui's ideas was proved. In 1870 it was his cadres who were primarily responsible for the overthrow of the Third Empire and the establishment of the Paris Commune—the first revolutionary, proletarian-led dictatorship.

During the past two years there have been mass riots in the streets of many major cities of the non-Communist world: Caracas, Montevideo, Lima, Baghdad, Havana, Capetown, Léopoldville, Algiers, Seoul, Ankara, Tokyo, Vientiane, San Salvador, and Saigon, among others. Nearly all have been directed against political friends of the United States or against policies favorable to the United States.

Besides promoting fiercely anti-American attitudes, these riots played an essential part in the overthrow of no less than eight governments that were firm allies of the United States: in Venezuela, Iraq, Cuba, South Korea, Turkey, Tokyo, El Salvador, Laos. The governments were overthrown just as thoroughly as by outright military defeat. Unguided mobs may shake but they do not overthrow regimes. They do not spontaneously produce consistent slogans and select strategic targets.

#### Cinderella Politics Out

The coordinated operations of these recent riots, and their high measure of success, are the product of trained Bolshevik neo-Blanquists.

In the next year or so the Communized government of Cuba will either be overthrown, or the enemy will move on to the staged take-over of Central and South America. In the next year or so, non-Communist regimes must retain power in the Indochinese successor states, or the enemy will move on to the staged take-over of the entire Southeast Asian peninsula.

For both operations, H-bombs are useless. Is it not obvious that we are not likely to meet either of these challenges unless we decide to lift our Cinderella political-warfare system from the scullery floor where we have so far left her in rags and tatters?

US & MC



#### Well Oiled

☛ BUSY SHINING our rifle stocks in preparation for the IG my bunkie and I were startled to hear the squad bay sergeant shout "Rank hath its privileges!" Thereupon he seized the pint bottle with the bourbon label on it that was setting between us and took a long deep draft of our linseed oil.

\$15.00 to Capt Jack L. Cole