SOME DISCONTENTS OF AMERICAN STRATEGISTS:

VIEWS FROM A MARGINAL MAN

by

JOHN F. SCOTT

American strategists disagree among themselves for the usual reasons people disagree: They know different facts, have different interpretations of facts, define problems differently, disagree about criteria, and hold different ideologies which color their analyses and prescriptions. Strategy, being a "soft science" with its civilian practitioners and an "art" with its military professionals, lacks those good starting points that the true sciences have—laws, theories, and axioms about which strategists can agree. Even economists with divergent social values agree on the law of diminishing returns to scale. But when strategists debate—when they reveal, too often by implication only, their enduring discontents—it is especially tough for their audience to know where they are going, not knowing where they started.

I don't mean to suggest that strategists are afflicted with some sort of intellectual anarchy, or that their advice to policymakers is diminished by their professional contentiousness. Indeed, the honesty and integrity of academic strategists, and even of government-affiliated strategists, compares favorably to that found in most other occupations. Rather, I am saying that people who consume the words and numbers of strategists might not understand their differences, and if there is one thing needed short of unassailable strategic wisdom, it is an alert and wise consumer. By consumer, I mean not only policymakers in government but also people who, from interest or felt obligation, regularly read our military and strategic journals.

I'm using the word strategist to mean those people whose vocation it is to study, talk, and write about problems of national security and, specifically, about the uses of force in international politics. They make their thoughts known beyond their own minds to influence their professional colleagues and the policies of government, which places the study of strategists in the realm of legitimate public curiosity. Their work is public property, so to speak, because they influence, however untraceably, the decisions of policymakers. That influence is subtle and selectively accepted by policymakers as "congenial ideas from sources that they trust," to use Colin Gray's trenchant words.[1]

Generally there are two great overland routes from the strategists to the policymaker. The first is direct: Publish in *Foreign Affairs*, testify before a congressional committee, talk to or "brief" a policymaker face to face. The second is indirect: Write or say something to which bureaucrats like me have access and it may make its way to policymakers in my papers and studies. The "me" and "my" in that bring forward the marginal people in the strategy-to-policy connection—inter alios, military and congressional staffs, members of in-house

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE **1983**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-1983 to 00-00-1983**
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Some Discontents of American Strategists: Views from a Marginal Man**		5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
		5b. GRANT NUMBER
		5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)		5d. PROJECT NUMBER
		5e. TASK NUMBER
		5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **U.S. Army War College,ATTN: Parameters ,122 Forbes Avenue ,Carlisle,PA,17013-5238**		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)		10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
		11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT **Approved for public release; distribution unlimited**		
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
14. ABSTRACT		
15. SUBJECT TERMS		

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**	**Same as Report (SAR)**	**10**	

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

military think tanks, middle-level policy officials, and speech writers. It's well and good to publish something topical and relevant on the Op-Ed pages of the *Times* or the *Post*, but the marginal people are the ones who keep the clippings of the stuff whose relevance is really yet to come or will recur.

My point of view—the view of the marginal man—is, then, not necessarily that of a strategist. Although some of my kind do double duty, riding bureau desks and littering the pages of strategic journals too, I am as many who do not think of themselves as strategists so much as consumers and users of strategists' words. Yet, I also write strategic studies, in which those literary and spoken contributions are quoted, paraphrased, and otherwise allowed to influence what I compose, including classified studies presumably written at the request of policymakers.

It is fair to say that one can have great respect for strategists without being able to define precisely what they are. One learns that strategists do strategic studies, but that not everyone who does a strategic study is a strategist. David Schoenbaum wrote that

> Americans have been in their element when ingenuity could be mass-produced [including] the civilian strategic thinker. For a nation confident of its capacity to teach creative writing in three credit-hours, strategic studies have been no insuperable problem.[2]

Schoenbaum was being too kind. But the fault lies not entirely with the strategist; it lies also with the consumer, including us marginal scribblers. I have seen colleagues quote as holy writ the rediscovery of NATO's nuclear strategy (a sure route to publication in military magazines) by an assistant professor whose "strategic thought" was not seen before or since, in preference to the works of Bernard Brodie, Maxwell Taylor, or Herman Kahn. Of course, I hasten to add, what is said should be more important than who said it. Yet, career strategists must realize that many of us marginal people pass through our strategy phase rather quickly: We have not necessarily done our homework; we do not necessarily know the literature; we do grasp at straws. We haven't all learned to sort the chaff from the wheat.

While I would argue for a catholic and eclectic interpretation of what is strategic writing and talk and, therefore, exclude nothing that illuminates a marginal person's task, my concern is not with technical debates that sooner or later can be resolved with direct evidence. The focus here is on modern strategic problems, the offered solutions to which carry value judgments, analyses, and recommendations whose acceptance depends more on plausibility than on proof. As I see it, the province of the modern strategist is that rocky field that separates those responsible for deciding whether war should be fought from those who would fight a war should it occur.[3] The complete strategist must have an understanding of both the political and the military milieus, and plow the ground that separates them. Military strategy, wrote Robert Osgood, is the "indispensible bridge between arms and policy."[4] Ideally, military strategy consists of estimating threats to political interests, calculating methods to deter or resist those threats, determining needed military capabilities, and formulating "public declarations about responses and other strategic components."[5] These "components" suggest "the extent to which military strategy transcends the traditional realm of the military specialist and exceeds the bounds of purely *military* logic."[6]

I have sought out some of those components, and I call them discontents. The six I

John F. Scott is an analyst with the Center for War Gaming, US Army War College, a position he assumed earlier this year. Previously he had served since 1973 as an economist with the Strategic Studies Institute and had been a member of the Institute's staff since 1963. Mr. Scott is a graduate of Wilkes College (Wilkes-Barre, Pa.) and holds an M.Ed. in Social Science from Shippensburg State College (Pa.). He is also a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Mr. Scott has written previously for *Parameters* and for various other journals, including *Air University Review* and *Army*.

have chosen are important because they represent great uncertainties in and behind the proposals that find their way to persons who make decisions. Another reason for choosing them is that they are so fundamental. As Fred Frohock said, "It is a commonplace that one can chase an argument back to a premise which is ultimate in the sense that it begins the argument and nothing further can be said to support the premise."[7]

One does not easily find the discontents in the polished articles of the journals of the profession. They are there, but they are smoothed over by the gentility of professional courtesy. In print, one says that "Boxley's thesis must, of course, be entertained, but his data demand thorough review and confirmation." In private, one can say, "Boxley's an idiot." Where one finds the discontents, then, is in the ear, by listening. No two strategists can talk about an issue for ten minutes without one discontent being dropped, to be picked up by the other. On some happy occasions, one can eavesdrop while the floor is littered with all six.

So I want to say what I believe Boxley and his colleagues are *really* at odds about in the literature, and it should sound familiar. Still, this impressionistic accounting of the discontents does not pretend to be a faithful and complete review of the beliefs of strategists. Robert Levine did that 20 years ago, and his taxonomies hold up remarkably well.[8] My representations of various views, while not whimsical, are not rigorous, precise, or very logical. What I offer are one marginal man's impressions of the important beliefs of American strategists, those premises back to which their arguments can be chased.

SOVIET POLICIES, SOVIET GOALS[9]

This is the most important of the discontents. When strategists disagree, the odds are that their disagreement can be traced back to their beliefs about the character of the Soviets and the Soviet Union in international politics. Is detente possible and beneficial? Should we negotiate and agree to arms reductions and controls? Which deterrence strategy should we shape? How much should we spend for defense? Fortunately, although a strategist's view of the Soviets often is a hidden assumption in his analyses and prescriptions, various interpretations of the Soviets—their policies, goals, world views—have been the subjects of articles in the open literature. But these treatments tend to construct one interpretation in contrast to a single alternative, as if our choice were so confined. My hallway strategists refuse to be thrown into one of only two interpretive baskets; our attempt to understand them must allow for variety.

An extreme view is that the Soviets will do nothing and agree to nothing unless it is in their interests and contrary to the interests of the West. Therefore, any arms limitation agreement, for example, is by definition contrary to our interests because the Soviets agreed to it. From this image, we can deduce the peculiar notion that we ought to bargain continuously or often with the Soviets so that we can find out what they do not like and then go do it, because what they do not like must be in our interests. But in that case, of course, the clever Soviets might pretend to dislike some things in the hope that we would do them. Synthesis: Do not talk with the Soviets at all about arms controls.

Another view is that the Soviets are fallible but determined; they intend to assist actively in the preordained downfall of the capitalist West. Therefore, most Soviet acts, statements, offers, and agreements are made or taken in the confidence that they represent a step toward this Soviet goal. Since the Soviets applaud protests against Western policies by Western citizens, then those protests must be nails in our coffin, or the Soviets wouldn't applaud! The pipeline benefits Germans east and west, but serves first Soviet political interests, or they wouldn't want to build it. None of the Soviet actions and agreements are free of backlash that could hurt the Soviets, but all of them are worth the risks.

A third view is that the Soviets are indeed hostile to the West, do expect to prevail down

the long haul of history, fear the strength of the West, compensate for their own insecurities with military strength, and so maneuver through time and the thickets of uncontrollable events toward their destiny. They are practical, able to compromise, willing to take risks, and willing to coexist—all to move things along in a rather general but correct direction. They will use force to maintain what they see as their interests; they value stability in politics and economics; and they place survival ahead of progress in day-to-day movement, with an eye on "the correlation of forces" for proper timing. Khrushchev's "we will bury you" is seen as a very Slavic idiom, meaning "we will outlive, outlast you."

Finally, the Soviets have a large, continental state and their actions can be explained by the politics of geography and the nation-state system as well as by the grip of an expansionist ideology. Were the ideology of the Russian empire to be capitalism or democratic socialism, things wouldn't be much different. Besides, giving labels and characteristics to regimes doesn't explain their behavior or predict it, because regimes in various modes of government from democracy to autarchy have been capable of policies similar to the Soviets' *and* widely different. Understanding Marxism, Leninism, and Soviet communism helps, but it is not sufficient for understanding the Soviet Union.

The strategists who hold most intractably to any of these various views tend to mirror the most unscientific feature of Marxism. That is, all the evidence they adduce to test a view is consistent with it. Marxism (and maybe most isms) fits what Karl Popper called historicism, a system of explaining history and predicting the future that is closed, irrefutable. All evidence can be rationalized as supporting the case. Marx, for example, was not wrong about the fall of capitalism; rather, his timing was bad. A Soviet concession to a Western position on arms control does not necessarily hold with the idea that their loss is our gain; rather, we may be blind to its implications: The Soviets may be looking to the long term while we look to the short; they may know where they're going while we don't.

Strategists who find that none of these views is without contradiction, who find that none of the models is a good predictor, or who just can't make up their minds tend also to see the Soviets as willful, determined political opponents of the Western democracies, but clearly fallible, often disorderly, and hopelessly human. The Soviets can be dealt with, and if our dealings are not as much to our interests as to theirs, it is our own fault, not the result of some higher wizardry of the Soviets.

As you might expect, strategists' views of the Soviets carry over into the other discontents.

THE SHORTCOMINGS OF DEMOCRACY[10]

Someone said that a dangerous anticommunist is a person who wants to fight his way to the archives of the Kremlin to prove he's been right all along. That wag's comment on how one can lose his values through the means by which he pursues them is a less polite version of the way some strategists view the decisionmaking and action-taking efficiency of democratic governments compared to that of totalitarian ones: The Soviets always have an "advantage" because they have no public opinion to consult and to heed. Such a view implies, strangely, that if we did not have a public to get in the way, we could fare much better against that totalitarian enemy, the Soviet state. Another implication is that the public (the amateur) must be wrong and the strategist (the professional) correct. Perhaps this is true for most strategic issues, as it is for plumbing, but attitude may be everything. Strategists, J. G. Lawler said, "have no hesitancy about invoking in their own favor a higher wisdom than is reachable by the unordained folk and in arguing on grounds that simply transcend the comprehension of the laity."[11]

Often, rather than contrasting all the social qualities that ought to be contrasted, strategists tend to engage in fruitless debate

about whether and to what extent the Western democracies are outshone by the oily efficiency of those oligarchies that run the states of our ideological opposition. Yet no one has suggested that America would conduct a popular referendum about whether to retaliate to massive nuclear attack in real time, so the issue refers to ambiguous crises in which the important questions are whether to enter or to persist, á là Vietnam. Wisdom is not necessarily at issue here, although strategists no less than most educated folk seem to believe in a natural aristocracy and, certainly, in a meritocracy. But wisdom is not the key because no strategist can show that, given their heads, "national authorities" would have done better in this or that crisis were they not haunted by public opinion. I have been waiting for articles in strategic journals on how the Vietnam War would have turned out had we had unstinting, undivided public support, national mobilization, a declaration of war, a military left to do its job, et cetera *ad nauseum*; or on how much better off we would be today had our leaders handled the Cuban missile crisis differently.

In any case, a large group of strategists sees no distinctive disadvantage to a democracy in its foreign and security policymaking *because of* democracy, or else they treat democracy as a "given," like the weather, sometimes equally unpredictable. In spite of laws that restrict him, an American President has enormous authority to act if he must when the time for decision is short. When decisions are not so urgent, the relevance of democratic restraint is suspect. What strategist, pretending to be working for the Kremlin, is going to advise the Presidium to risk nation, ally, and army on the alleged restraining influence of American democratic decisionmaking? Finally, the strategists of this moderate view do not deny that popular will constitutes a constraint on decisions and a limit on resources, but they also will draw the contrast between losing the next election and losing one's position, or life, without an election. The totalitarian elites are not free from restraints either; and, indeed, those restraints are in consequence more immediate and bloody.

Strategists who believe in a Soviet advantage find that we face an opponent able to forge long-range strategies with the ability to see them through by denying voiceless citizens sufficient bread and board; able to sustain an indefinite commitment to hostilities unconstrained by a free press, a noisy people, and a contentious parliament; and able to husband its military and technological secrets in societies where few have any right to know.

But is proof to be found in Soviet successes and American and Western failures? The Soviets may be accomplished technical second-story men and we might need better locks on our doors, but are Poland, Afghanistan, and the area of human rights (even the Soviets' version) their success stories? What are the criteria by which one judges success and failure? Personally, I am pleased that we have survived a long cold war and some periods of hot war without the loss of our civil and political liberties, the same we promised ourselves in the Constitution, and I think this ought to be at least one criterion worth mentioning.

Strategists will continue to disagree about the relative merits of open and closed societies in protracted conflict, and their argument will be as meaningless as it has been unless they mean to change the way we govern ourselves and live. And, while disagreeing, they will continue to be unable to predict the next move of either the open or the closed society.

ON THE USES OF HISTORY[12]

No strategist innocent of military and diplomatic history will be awarded a black belt in deterrence and defense. Important too is some knowledge of the development of one's own country; if American strategists knew as much about their own country as they claim to know about the Soviet Union, we might all be the better for it. These aspersions aside, strategists differ about how much the content of strategic study should be informed by history and in what way.

While strategists do not generally populate the extremes of "totally" or "none at all" in answer to the question of history's relevance, they do argue about what is

relevant, about what uses can be found for military and diplomatic history. "History teaches," as so many writers like to say, but history may have dull students. One could say that history, and that includes personal experiences, too often comes out as thoughtless anecdote; too often the debater's tendency is, as Montaigne said, to crush you with examples. Unless the reader or the witness reflects, considers, and compares, he is no more insightful than those French troops who, Napoleon said, saw nothing of Russia but the pack on the back of the man in front of them.

The strategist, in discussions with other strategists and especially with others who may or may not be in his field, really faces the perpetual problem of what "doing strategy" is all about. Who could deny that something can be learned from those inexperienced Russian tank commanders in World War II who managed to place hundreds of tanks in a basin of earth to be shot at like fish in a barrel by German tankers? But does that lesson have anything to do with *strategy*? Although I would be prepared to argue that anyone—platoon leader, President, or think-tank contractor—who must plan and think through a series of actions to be taken contingent on the actions of an intelligent enemy, and for a conscious objective, is "doing strategy," by custom and convention that definition would not apply to the strategists I have in mind as the subjects of this essay. Rather, I think of strategists as people who do not take policy as a "given," who, indeed, often deal with and question policy with the view of making it better by wrestling with the ends and means of force for *national* purposes. People who tackle the difficult job of shaping the best force to implement national policies are planners and, of course, strategists in their own right, just as chess players are, but neither can presume to change the rules. If this is elitist, so be it, but it's a necessary artificial distinction in the context of the relevance of history. To the planner and the field general, the incident of the tanks in the basin is relevant, if obvious; to the other, "modern" strategist, the tank lesson is interesting but does not help answer the questions of, say, when and where we should intervene with military force. And, as you might have guessed, the lessons of history that *are* accepted as relevant can and often do clash among strategists and between strategists and planners. Both sets of debaters could use the help of historians.

The inclination of people whose vocation it is to study military history, to single out one of the most pertinent groups, is not to write strategy but to write more military history. They do not, from their disciplinary base, propose to us what policy to adopt and what strategy to choose. They tell us what happened in wars. Unfortunately, policy analysts in the national security business cannot wait until all the evidence is in, and they cannot, by the laws of physics, be military historians on a par with full-time historians and be full-time strategists too. Occasionally, a historian like Michael Howard takes the time to understand contemporary strategic problems and writes a "history," each paragraph of which is conscious that it is being written to illuminate today's and tomorrow's strategic problems without forcing that history to be relevant. This is rare, and it takes people with Howard's talents to make it happen; indeed, it is a specialty into which strategists would welcome more historians.

Strategists must be their own historians too, of course, and they do use history anecdotally and often. If one thing can be said in their favor, and I here assert it, it is that they are better historians than most historians are strategists. Somehow, calling on history to support Western de-emphasis of deterrence sounds like a poor use of history and a profound ignorance of deterrence. Yet, citing the tragedy of the First World War as a proximate product of inflexible mobilization plans makes sense if and when analogous conditions allow us to apply that "lesson" for today's planning. Both are examples of lessons offered by historians. In the latter case, the historian took the trouble to learn something about mobilization; in the former case, the historian forgot to do his homework on deterrence.

Still, the gist of strategists' disputes about the relevance of history is in the implied, often unconscious, use of strategic

suppositions. These are beliefs about cause and effect at rather high levels of abstraction; analogous events in history are their only sources. The domino theory and the Munich syndrome are examples of these usually unspoken beliefs that A leads to B or A causes B, where A and B are the decisions of statesmen in the great game of states. Historians, bless them, are less likely than strategists to leap to these suppositions because they know the complexities, the details, of the recorded events, few of which are so clear in their lessons as some strategists would have it. But "policy-relevant" strategists must propose now, must analyze with what they've got today, and they will argue about the uses of history, tragically as if to settle on a "correct" meaning would answer today's problems. What they really mean is that they are short on theory, that awful and necessary word behind every prescription for action from intervention to armor tactics. And, to square the circle, there is no other reliable first source of strategic theory than "history." Russell Weigley said it this way:

> Military history remains the best guide to which the strategist can resort, the military man's only substitute for the experience through which the practitioners of other professions continually learn, but which is so necessarily denied to the military most of the time.[13]

Perhaps the strategist should see history as he would a foreign culture, for what it is, unique to its own time and place. As we do not today burn people at the stake for having visions and doing crazed dances, so too should we respect the idiosyncrasies of "history's" record while trying to know and understand as much of it as we can. Someone was asked why he read the great classics of literature; he said because then he would never be surprised. The strategist's "use" of history might well be like that.

THE ROLE OF ALLIES[14]

Hallway eavesdropping strongly suggests that American strategists disagree about the extent to which allies should subordinate their policies to ours. This is not as bad as it sounds, for strategists who complain about European NATO deficiencies in military budgets, threat perception, and military doctrine seem to believe that correcting these deficiencies is also in the best interests of NATO Europe. This school of strategists may be called the "battlefield planners," because their test of what's good is how well the alliance would probably fare in a defensive war.

Another group, the "gone natives," tend to place allies' political values and social constraints above military preparations where those two objectives clash. They are consequently tolerant of ambiguity and probably, one suspects, not always comfortable with their own nation's policies, not least because they believe they understand allies' limitations. They begin analysis by standing, as well as one can, in an ally's shoes, vicariously internalizing his values, politics, and economics, before judging whether he is indeed backsliding on efforts to achieve the common goals of the alliance.

A third group needs little explanation. Their view is that we are doing "them" an enormous favor, that you'd think they would be more grateful, and that if they don't start "doing more for themselves" we ought to get out.

Not surprisingly, each set of views of allies probably can be correlated with views of the Soviet Union: European ideas about detente are naive, are geopolitically understandable and sensible, are more sophisticated than our own, and so on. Or one might hear, "Sure, I know that Denmark is small and relatively powerless in international affairs, but *its* interests and *our* interests clearly suggest that our common policy should be . . . ." Or, when gentlemanly debates go sour, one might hear, "Just which country are you working for, anyway?"

Does it make a difference how we see other, allied nations? Does it make a difference how we understand them and how we articulate our understanding of them when doing strategy? It does, I believe, when one sees the contemporary strategist often as the

unpopular person who says no to otherwise feasible constructions of military force for deterrence and defense. That is, understanding the political cultures of allies (and of our own country) too often shrinks the bounds of the militarily possible, a message unlikely to be welcomed by policymakers and Pentagon planners. Yet the counterpoint is that the strategist is too often anti-political, forgetting that peacetime politics has to do with persuasion. Citizens generally don't want to spend more for weapons; political stewardship and leadership is thus sometimes about persuading citizens of the alliance that sacrifices—going against the grain of their culture, if you will—are necessary if they are to have those other values they would rather have. We are dealing always with trade-offs, choices.

Yet that is too simple also. The purpose of understanding allies for shaping a common defense is to try to know when the sacrifices for defense make Denmark no longer Denmark, Germany no longer Germany, and even the United States no longer the United States. The greatest achievement of the Atlantic Alliance is not that it has kept the Soviet Army out of West Europe but that it has kept its members' independence *and* their political cultures intact (if some have changed, the change has come by their own, home-grown decisions). Whether this has been wise is a question for philosophers, not for strategists. Strategists must, it seems to me, assume a conservative bias toward one's own and allied societies—that is, they must assume that the people of these countries *want* it the way it is, and want to keep it that way as much as possible while coping with the expedients of national security. The American strategist who concludes that ally X is derelict—going the way of the Roman Empire by short-sightedly feeding the Sybaritic whims of Welfare-Stateism at the expense of its long-term security—is telling the policymaker nothing he does not already suspect, nothing that he can use in shaping strategy.

If it is necessary to persuade an ally to move at least a little distance from the cultural pleasures of the moment toward greater sacrifice for collective security, then the most effective persuasion will be based on an accurate, sympathetic understanding of that ally's society and history. Indeed, if the strategist's own country values its alliance with another, then standing first in that ally's shoes is the only way eventually to arrive at policies in his own country's interests.

THE THIRD WORLD AND ITS TROUBLES[15]

While strategists do divide into groups disposed to look benignly or not on authoritarian regimes "friendly" to the United States, this latest semantic fad is less instructive than strategists' divisions about inside versus outside sources of discontent in the Third World. To one school, a communist is behind every untoward development affecting Western interests in developing countries; to another group, the communist element is sometimes present and sometimes not, and when it is, it exploits ground fertile for revolution and war. To a third group, the machinations of outside communists pale beside the local social problems of developing countries, not the least of those problems being the tendency of the local military to save democracy by suppressing it for the indefinite duration.

Prescription mirrors diagnosis, and one is left with relative emphasis on economic assistance or military assistance, or one is left with seeing the agonies of change in Third World states as a loss to the West and a victory for communism or as a predictable consequence of dictatorship that must fall of its own corruption, hurting no one more than the people on whom it falls. Remove the force of real or imagined communist influence, and the division among strategists is between trade and commerce to improve a struggling nation versus grants and aid, between the invisible hand working through the black box and the visible hand that risks sundering the integrity of common folk á là Welfare-Stateism. As for what *they* want, the Third World radicals with their new international economic order are to be heeded as the somewhat exaggerated expression of

dissatisfaction with the system as it is now dominated by the powerful North, or they are to be confronted, even "turned around," and told what's what in the world of Realeconomics.

The point is, of course, that the debate over the degree of communist influence in developing states is important because how we see national independence and internal freedoms in Third World states will influence how we deal with them. If they are the battleground for the fight against international communism, then anything and everything goes: arms, aid, trade, whatever—just keep that naval base operating or that bauxite shipping out. If their problems are largely internal, then cut the arms and channel the aid around the people in the palaces. In other words, strategists believe that Third World leaders are either good guys or bad guys and ought to be dealt with accordingly—good or bad not necessarily reflecting personalities so much as their stand on communism and on political and civil rights in their own countries. All of this will offend the sensibilities of strategists and policymakers alike who wish to pretend that Third World leaders, problems, and policies are studied dispassionately by strategists. Sometimes they are, but listen in the hallways and at the coffee breaks between paper presentations and you may find that one strategist's jackbooted oppressor is another's misunderstood friend and keeper of freedom's flame.

THE MORAL CONTENT OF POLICY[16]

It would be comforting to believe that strategists are amoral in their role as analysts of force in international politics, thereby consigning moral criteria in American foreign policies to the status of "independent variables" affecting, positively or negatively, American interests with this or that nation and throughout the world. I say comforting because then the consumers of strategic literature could better judge the prescription they receive. But, of course, this is fiction. With exceptions, strategists do have predispositions about the moral content of policy, and it is to their credit that those predispositions have been made explicit in nuclear strategy if not in dealings with Third World leaders. What may boggle the mind of readers of strategists is not that counterforce deterrence is more moral than countervalue deterrence, but rather that so many counterforce advocates also are inveterate Realpoliticians in dealing with human rights criteria in relations with the Third World. Now, if you didn't follow that, it means that some of the same people who say that counterforce is more moral say that human rights criteria in the application of our foreign policy toward "friendly" authoritarian regimes is wrong, or overdone. The Catholic bishops wrestling with the morality of deterrence do not have that problem, although they will; if they have not already, they will find that counterforce looks good until you see that there's really no way to deter without threatening to kill people wholesale.

Counterforce is one of those wonderfully ambiguous words, but, generically, one could say that counterforce weapons are an implied threat to strike back at military forces of all kinds. Whatever the case, strategists and bishops alike must wonder what to do with strategic nuclear counterforce weapons that survive an opponent's first strike by *his* counterforce weapons. Can the Soviet Union and the United States really hit the homeland deployments of military forces with strategic nuclear retaliations without killing most of the people who live near the military bases that many divisions, squadrons, and naval fleets call home? Can the really big missiles be deterred by threatening to strike back at their empty silos or at their brothers left at home? If "no cities" means "hostage cities," this does not mean that we should throw counterforce out with the bathwater, only that central war deterrence means a threat to kill a lot of people who have nothing to do with manning weapons. (I shall be happy to be refuted in angry letter and essay.)

It's worth noting, especially since I share the guilt myself, that another school of strategists which believes that human rights

criteria ought to be a strong part of our foreign policies toward other nations also does not like counterforce emphasis in central war deterrence. We of this group have to live with the crushing inconsistency of claiming to care about how people are treated by their governments while also preferring to threaten to kill people to deter their governments from attacking the United States with nuclear weapons. Of course, no one, to my knowledge, prescribes a pure human rights or pure counter-people policy, but to go further would be to dive too deeply into strategic analysis, and, as I have said, I am not a strategist.

CONCLUSION

These discontents are hardly a comprehensive collection of strategists' debating points; indeed, what I have said is not fair to any *one* strategist who, in the three o'clock in the morning of his ego, knows that nothing is so simple as it comes out in the literature or in hallway debates. If sketching these peculiar discontents has value for the readership of the strategists, that value may be as an aid to discrimination.

The strategist who cavalierly asserts the absolute truth of the Soviet character; the clear crisis management superiority of one system of government over another; the perfidy or nobility of allies; the unstinting and exclusive certainty about the source of Third World troubles; and the side on which the angels dwell in foreign and deterrence policies—that strategist should be held in suspicion. The consumer of the strategists' literature will then spot the exceptional essay, in pen or voice, which manages to persuade us to its reasonableness without leaning on the unsteady foundation of pretended certainty in these areas of discontent.

But wait: since Robert Levine's *The Arms Debate*, which, as I maintained earlier, still gives an accurate anatomy of the profession's schools of thought, at least one new phenomenon is worth noting. This is the Ginger Man strategist, the ribald character in J. P. Donleavy's novel of the same title, the ostensibly irresponsible, irascible, and likable reprobate whose sense of social responsibility reached its maturity at his mother's breast. The Ginger Man strategist *probably* (the doubt is one of his strengths) does not intend to be taken seriously; he is the iconoclast, the provocateur, Peck's Bad Boy, a little son-of-a-gun. Like the Ginger Man, he's noticeable, he's able to exist, *because* he can be seen against the background of the straight society—the relativist plodders who incorporate restraint and common sense in their proposals. He's (or she's) the one who defends an especially wild-haired proposal with the refrain, "Sure, I know it can't work, but we've got to make people *think* about it."

The problem with the Ginger Person is that he is taken seriously, sometimes, and, after years of self-delusion, by himself, because he does indeed have appeal for some marginal people and policymakers too. That minority of marginal people whose presuppositions make them open to the Ginger Person are frustrated, and frustration breeds violence of reason.

Full-time, professional strategists in America are patriotic, sincere, bright, and often underpayed borderline egomaniacs whose numbers and sometimes conflicting voices speak well for our democracy. I have said nothing about them that could not be said about people in other academic and policy-science fields. We marginal people need not like them, but we must understand them.

NOTES

1. Colin S. Gray, *Strategic Studies and Public Policy: The American Experience* (Lexington: The Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1982), p. 25.
2. David Shoenbaum, review of *The American Way of War*, by Russell Weigley, in *Survival*, 17 (January-February 1975), 50.
3. From Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), p. 244.
4. Robert E. Osgood, *NATO: The Entangling Alliance* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 7.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Fred Frohock, "Reasoning in Politics," *The Journal of Politics*, 34 (November 1972), 1040.
8. Robert Levine, *The Arms Debate* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1963).
9. While I will not cite sources that associate individual strategists with my characterizations of points of view, I will