

weapons have been exchanged. The burden of proof remains on those who assert that meaningful limitation is possible.

A nuclear response to either conventional or nuclear attack can cause destruction which goes far beyond "legitimate defense." Such use of nuclear weapons would not be justified.

In the face of this frightening and highly speculative debate on a matter involving millions of human lives, we believe the most effective contribution or moral judgment is to introduce perspectives by which we can assess the empirical debate. Moral perspective should be sensitive not only to the quantitative dimensions of a question, but to its psychological, human and religious characteristics as well. The issues of limited war is not simply the size of weapons contemplated or the strategies projected. The debate should include the psychological and political significance of crossing the boundary from the conventional to the nuclear arena in any form. To cross this divide is to enter a world where we have no experience of control, much testimony against its possibility and therefore no moral justification for submitting the human community to this risk. (70) We therefore express our view that the first imperative is to prevent any use of nuclear weapons and our hope that leaders will resist the notion that nuclear conflict can be limited, contained or won in any traditional sense.

D. Deterrence in Principle and Practice

The moral challenge posed by nuclear weapons is not exhausted by an analysis of their possible uses. Much of the political and moral debate of the nuclear age has concerned the strategy of deterrence. Deterrence is at the heart of the U.S.-Soviet relationship, currently the most dangerous dimension of the nuclear arms race.

1. The Concept and Development of Deterrence Policy

The concept of deterrence existed in military strategy long before the nuclear age, but it has taken on a new meaning and significance since 1945. Essentially deterrence means "dissuasion of a potential adversary from initiating an attack or conflict, often by the threat of unacceptable retaliatory damage." (71) In the nuclear age deterrence has become the centerpiece of both U.S. and Soviet policy. Both superpowers have for many years now been able to promise a retaliatory response which can inflict "unacceptable damage." A situation of stable deterrence depends on the ability of each side to deploy its retaliatory forces in ways that are not vulnerable to an attack (i.e., protected against a "first-strike"); preserving stability re-

quires a willingness by both sides to refrain from deploying weapons which appear to have a first strike capability.

This general definition of deterrence does not explain either the elements of a deterrence strategy or the evolution of deterrence policy since 1945. A detailed description of either of these subjects would require an extensive essay using materials which can be found in abundance in the technical literature on the subject of deterrence. (72) Particularly significant is the relationship between "declaratory policy" (the public explanation of our strategic intentions and capabilities) and "action policy" (the actual planning and targeting policies to be followed in a nuclear attack).

The evolution of deterrence strategy has passed through several stages of declaratory policy. Using the U.S. case as an example, there is a significant difference between "massive retaliation" and "flexible response," and between "mutual assured destruction" and "countervailing strategy." It is also possible to distinguish between "counterforce" and "countervalue" targeting policies; and to contrast a posture of "minimum deterrence" with "extended deterrence." These terms are well known in the technical debate on nuclear policy; they are less well known and sometimes loosely used in the wider public debate. It is important to recognize that there has been substantial continuity in U.S. action policy in spite of real changes in declaratory policy. (73)

The recognition of these different elements in the deterrent and the evolution of policy means that moral assessment of deterrence requires a series of distinct judgments. They include: an analysis of the *factual character* of the deterrent (e.g., what is involved in targeting doctrine); analysis of the *historical development* of the policy (e.g., whether changes have occurred which are significant for moral analysis of the policy); the relationship of deterrence policy and other aspects of U.S.-Soviet affairs; and determination of the key *moral questions* involved in deterrence policy.

2. The Moral Assessment of Deterrence

The distinctively new dimensions of nuclear deterrence were recognized by policymakers and strategists only after much reflection. Similarly, the moral challenge posed by nuclear deterrence was grasped only after careful deliberation. The moral and political paradox posed by deterrence was concisely stated by Vatican II:

"Undoubtedly, armaments are not amassed merely for use in wartime. Since the defensive strength of any nation is thought to depend on its capacity for immediate retaliation, the stockpiling of arms which grows from year to year serves, in a way hitherto unthought of, as a deterrent to potential attackers. Many people look upon this as the most effective way known at the present time for maintaining some sort of peace among nations. Whatever one may think of this form of deterrent, people are convinced that the arms race, which quite a few countries have entered, is no infallible way of maintaining real peace and that the resulting so-called balance of power is no sure genuine path to achieving it. Rather than eliminate the causes of war, the arms race serves only to aggravate the position. As long as extravagant sums of money are poured into the development of new weapons, it is impossible to devote adequate aid in tackling the misery which prevails at the present day in the world. Instead of eradicating international conflict once and for all, the contagion is spreading to other parts of the world. New approaches, based on reformed attitudes, will have to be chosen in order to remove this stumbling block, to free the earth from its pressing anxieties, and give back to the world a genuine peace." (74)

Without making a specific moral judgment on deterrence, the council clearly designated the elements of the arms race: the tension between "peace of a sort" preserved by deterrence and "genuine peace" required for a stable international life; the contradiction between what is spent for destructive capacity and what is needed for constructive development.

In the post-conciliar assessment of war and peace and specifically of deterrence, different parties to the political-moral debate within the church and in civil society have focused on one or another aspect of the problem. For some, the fact that nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945 means that deterrence has worked, and this fact satisfies the demands of both the political and the moral order. Others contest this assessment by highlighting the risk of failure involved in continued reliance on deterrence and pointing out how politically and morally catastrophic even a single failure would be. Still others note that the absence of nuclear war is not necessarily proof that the policy of deterrence has prevented it. Indeed, some would find in the policy of deterrence the driving force in the superpower arms race. Still other observers, many of them Catholic moralists, have stressed that deterrence may not morally in-

By BISHOP ROBERT J. ROSE

This section of the pastoral letter takes up the complex and crucial issue of "deterrence", the mutual capability to affect the other with a level of destruction so high as to render aggression unfeasible. Deterrence based on nuclear weapons rather than on conventional arms has helped to create the "new moment" that calls for new moral analysis.

Among the factors making such an analysis imperative are the following:

- the grave and constantly increasing danger of nuclear war;
- the arms race, which shows no signs of lessening, and which consumes precious resources needed to relieve human misery;
- and the knowledge that our national leaders are now talking in terms of "prolonged" and "winnable" nuclear war.

The analysis faces the difficulty of reconciling two moral imperatives: Preventing nuclear war from ever occurring and protecting values of justice and freedom. The analysis takes into consideration both moral principles and national policies and strategies.

The bishops affirm strongly that, just as there are moral limits regarding the use of nuclear weapons, so there are moral limits to deterrence. In specific terms, intending to kill the innocent as part of a nuclear deterrent strategy is clearly not morally acceptable. The good end does not justify the evil means.

U.S. government officials state that U.S. policy is not to target civilian populations "as such." That assurance leaves a further question: Would aiming only at military targets which still had the potential to kill enormous numbers of innocent civilians be moral? The principle of proportionality comes into play in such a case. An act of war can only be morally justified if the good that is accomplished or safeguarded is truly in proportion to the human toll or other damage that is caused.

The bishops reach the conclusion that deterrence can be judged morally acceptable only under very limited conditions and only as a step along the road to mutual disarmament and genuine peace. It is by no means a long-term basis for peace.

Among the limitations that must be imposed on deterrence are the following:

1. Deterrence exists only to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by others. This means that it is not acceptable to be planning for "prolonged" nuclear war or for "winning" nuclear war.
2. We must resist the notion that we need to be superior in nuclear weapons. All we need is sufficiency to deter.
3. Every change in our policies or systems of deterrence must be evaluated in the light of whether it will indeed lead us along the road to progressive mutual disarmament.

As practical steps toward the ultimate goal of mutual disarmament and peace, the bishops recommend support for several initiatives, including immediate, bilateral, verifiable agreements to halt the testing, production, and deployment of new nuclear weapons systems. They also recommend negotiated bilateral deep cuts in the arsenals of the superpowers and the early conclusion of a comprehensive test ban treaty.

The bishops conclude this section by pointing out that it is the right and the duty of citizens to scrutinize the policy of deterrence, and to take part conscientiously in the public debate on this vital issue.

THE HUMAN RACE



Lou Grant "War Heads"