


IS THE FOOT-SOLDIER *Obsolete?*

BY GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

WHAT does the much-discussed “new look” mean to the U.S. Army? Are the new weapons — the A-bomb and the H-bomb, the guided missile, and radar-controlled, supersonic, jet-propelled aircraft — pushing the time-tested infantry-armor-artillery team out of the military picture? In a word, have ground troops and fighting on the ground become obsolete as far as American military needs are concerned?

The answer to that question is “No.” But it’s an answer that has to be supported by taking a careful look — a “new look,” if you like — at American policy and American objectives.

We could hardly decide what tools we might need with which to build a house until we had decided what

kind of house we wanted. Military forces are the tools of national policy. They are extremely expensive tools, and no nation wants more of them than it needs for the kind of job it has to do, or wants the wrong kind. History is full of warnings of what happens when the wrong choices are made. Thus in the years before 1914, the Germans decided they needed a battleship fleet — about as expensive a bad guess as they could have made. When war came, their costly fleet was not strong enough to wrest command of the sea from the British Navy, and it spent four years in inglorious inaction. Had the money wasted on useless battleships been spent to increase the numbers of the one naval weapon Germany could hope to use effectively — the submarine — it



might well have provided the margin of victory.

No nation, however rich, can afford to expend enough of its resources year after year on unproductive military power to enable it to be supreme on land, on the sea, and in the air at one and the same time; unless, of course, as Rome did, it has succeeded in eliminating all substantial rivals.

This principle of "you can't have everything" may sometimes run counter to the national instinct of wanting to be secure against any exigency. This is especially true when collective security is considered by an association of governments. It is all very well for the United States and Britain to argue with the Dutch, for example, that Holland needs no navy except minesweepers, since American and British naval forces are ample to defend Holland's sea approaches. The deep-rooted Dutch instinct for the sea still requires the maintenance of a substantial Dutch fleet, however soundly based may be the argument that the money would be better expended on interceptor aircraft or infantry battalions.

SO TODAY, Americans — contemplating a navy as supreme on the sea as any navy could hope to be, and with the world's second naval power our faithful ally; contemplating also the world's most powerful long-range air force, and an industrial and technical production base which is fully capable of maintaining

almost any kind of fighting power we might need — must still remember that in three wars, World Wars I and II and Korea, the final arbiter as far as we were concerned was the American soldier on the ground with the weapons of land-warfare under his control. There is a tendency to say, "We do not know when, where, how or under what conditions we may have to fight. Therefore let us be ready to fight any time, any place, in any fashion and under any conceivable conditions. Let us have some of everything, from H-bombs to carbines."

The trouble is that if we have *enough* of everything, our economy will crack under the strain, and if we don't have enough of the right things our policy will be enfeebled and we might get licked in a war. That's really what the "new look" is all about: an attempt to make a choice on a more sensible basis than just putting an arbitrary ceiling on the military budget and then splitting the budgetary pie into three roughly equal slices.

There is no use trying to hide from the fact that we are living in a period of military revolution. It isn't just an atomic, or thermo-nuclear revolution; it is a triple revolution, the nuclear revolution plus the electronic revolution plus the jet-propulsion revolution. Far more powerful weapons (A-bombs and H-bombs) can be much more accurately directed over longer dis-





tances (electronics) and move at speeds which would have been incredible just a few years ago (jet propulsion). It is natural that we, with the world's highest standard of living, should wish that no actual war with such weapons should ever be fought. Our primary purpose, therefore, is a deterrent purpose: to prevent any other power from resorting to war as an instrument of its policy. Specifically, at present, this means deterring the Soviet Union from resorting to war as a means of accomplishing its primary objective of world domination.

LET US EXAMINE the true nature of a deterrent military policy. It operates not on our own minds, but on those of the enemy leaders, the men who make the Soviet decisions. It is effective only as long as it holds them back from reaching decisions that would be contrary to our interests. It is our Big Stick. But the enemy, as long as he continues to hold to the purposes which it prevents him from accomplishing, will never cease figuring out how he can duck inside its swing, or paralyze the arm which swings it, or so protect himself that it can't hurt him too much.

One such series of enemy calculations — purely as a hypothetical example — might run something like this: "Of the total nuclear capability of the U.S., 50% (let us say) depends on overseas bases in the British Isles

and Western Europe. Of the remaining 50%, we can neutralize half (25% of the total) by defensive action. Therefore if we can, by surprise, knock out all the bases in the British Isles and Western Europe, we will cut down the weight of the Big Stick by 75%. The rest of its impact we can absorb and keep on going until we have conquered all Western Europe and hold the population thereof as hostages to prevent any further nuclear assault upon us."

The decisive factor in this calculation, it will be seen, is not the Big Stick itself but the ability of the NATO forces to defend the air bases from any form of surprise attack. It may, of course, be contended that the bulk of these defensive capabilities should be the responsibility of our allies and not of American forces. There is sound logic in this view — except for one other very important consideration. Part of the deterrent effects of our policy must lie in the degree to which we are able to convince the enemy that if he does so-and-so, he gets hit with the Big Stick. If he thinks we won't use it, we might as well not have it.

The best guarantee for our friends and the best convincer for the enemy that any attack on our allies involves immediate retaliation by the full force of U.S. power is the actual presence of substantial U.S. ground and tactical air forces in such locations that they would be immediately involved in





any Soviet assault on Western Europe.

Consider the character of the American decisions which must be contemplated: (1) if the attack cannot be made without it being a direct attack on substantial U.S. forces, no American government could hesitate — the decision to strike back would be automatic; but (2) if no U.S. forces were there, if the attack were purely on the forces and territory of an ally, then it is possible to imagine political and economic conditions in the U.S. which might cause the government of that day (whose political complexion cannot be foreseen) to take time out to decide whether or not, in this instance, we should use the Big Stick.

THUS a deterrent policy, as the major objective of our military expenditures, must include not only the striking forces which we have called the Big Stick, but also the means for making sure that under all conceivable conditions we shall be able to use the Big Stick so that there will be no chance for the enemy to indulge in any wishful thinking — to his own and our own destruction in an atomic holocaust. If overseas bases must be chiefly protected by the people in whose territory they are located, we must nevertheless actively participate in that defense.

And finally, of course, we must also be able, on our own, to protect

our home territory, bases, and industrial production against whatever kind and scale of attack we may consider the enemy capable of delivering; which involves, again, an elaborate air defense establishment, a sound Civil Defense organization, and the essential police and internal security forces against sabotage and subversion.

We cannot afford to permit the enemy to indulge in any illusions that he can, by any form of attack on our home territory, so reduce our offensive capabilities that he can absorb the balance. Nor is this all, for there is yet another enemy calculation which we must be prepared to counter. He might — if he became sufficiently desperate — think in terms of absorbing our initial blows, provided he could be reasonably sure they could not be sustained.

Now how much — the enemy might ask himself — can our air forces, our submarines, our very considerable and little-noted mine-laying potential, plus sabotage, do to cut down or choke off altogether the flow of American fighting power to Europe and the Middle East? The answer — if the enemy is to be deterred from taking chances — must be in discouraging terms. That means that our anti-submarine and ocean escort capabilities, our mine-sweeping forces and other mine counter-measures, the security of our continental and outlying naval bases and commercial harbors and





those of our allies against any form of attack, must be sufficient to assure the safety of our overseas lines of supply, which, in war, become the lifelines of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Here again, a certain number of ground troops are involved. For example, Iceland in hostile hands would be a threat of no small dimensions to our sea lanes, and the defense of Iceland is in large part a matter of having enough ground troops there to toss an enemy raiding expedition back into the sea. In this case, the ground troops would have to be American; Iceland has no army, and probably cannot (for political reasons) create one.

So our deterrent policy, considered simply as such, seems to demand a well-balanced establishment of air, naval, and ground forces in due proportion, though the percentage of ground forces may be somewhat less than we have hitherto deemed necessary. This, again, is what the "new look" seems to contemplate.

But the deterrent policy isn't everything, either. It might not work; and then we'd have to fight and win a war.

In that case the deterrent forces become merely the first-line weapons with which we hammer the enemy while mobilizing and deploying against him the whole of our national fighting power.

What we do not possess in the way of regular fighting forces for all these

purposes must be made up from reserve forces—from the citizen forces, such as the National Guard, which have always been the backbone of our fighting power in any major conflict. If, for the sake of maintaining a powerful Big Stick for deterrent effect, and because the national economy has limits to its military expenditures, we reduce the number of our ground forces in the regular establishment, it follows that ground forces must be given a proportionately larger place in the reserve establishment—to the extent, that is, that forces of this type might be needed in a full-dress war.

Only ground forces employing the old, old techniques of fire-power plus mobility are capable of taking and holding ground, and the appearance of atomic tactical weapons on the battlefield does not alter this basic truth. Ground blasted by atomic fire-power must still be physically occupied by troops before it can be considered secure. Enemy troops shaken by atomic fire-power must be hit and dispersed by our own forces before they recover.

THERE has been a tendency to assume that our announced determination, in case of further armed aggression, to "retaliate by means and at times and places of our own choosing" means simply dumping nuclear weapons on Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and other Soviet cities and industrial centers.





But this not necessarily the whole story; it might not be the story at all.

If the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and of his will to win is indeed the object of all military operations, one means of doing this might very well be the application of tactical-type atomic weapons to his military establishment.

For just one example, the whole of Eastern Germany and of Poland and the lands along the Baltic shores is a region crammed with Soviet barracks, air bases, naval facilities, supply and ammunition dumps, military railways and headquarters. All this area is within comfortable reach of very-high-speed jet aircraft capable of carrying tactical A-bombs. Much of it is also within range of guided missiles capable of carrying atomic warheads with accuracy in any kind of weather. The knowledge that we possess — if and when we get that far — the capability of destroying the bulk of the military establishment essential for any possible Soviet offensive in Western Europe, may in itself have a considerable deterrent effect. This effect will be enhanced by the undoubted fact that a pin-pointed attack on purely military targets, avoiding in large measure any wholesale destruction of civilian lives, would be undertaken by the American people with far less reluctance than an attack on the massed populations of great cities.

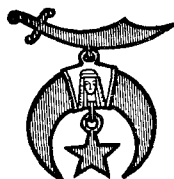
But in any such concept we must not forget that the American forces

in Berlin, and the stout German population of that city, would be hostages in Soviet hands unless the atomic shocks were followed up by a vigorous ground operation before the Soviet forces could recover from the shattering effect.

This is hardly the place for an extended discussion of the tactics of the atomic battlefield. It is clear that whatever happens, we shall still need ground troops of very high quality — and in a major war, a great many of them. Also it is clear that since we must, in the latter case, place great dependence on our National Guard and reserve units, steps have got to be taken to enable these units to attain and maintain a far higher state of peacetime readiness than they have ever had before.

The "new look" may mark a shift in emphasis, a settling down for the long pull during which the fate of the world remains dependent on our ability to preserve freedom without having to fight an atomic war; but it certainly does not mark any decline in the value of ground troops, or any doubt that in any future war, as in the past, the final decision will lie in the hands of the men who are able to go forward with stout hearts amid all the terrors of the modern battlefield to drive the enemy from his positions and to take and hold the good earth from which man now and forever derives his livelihood, and on which all his hopes for the future remain founded.





MEET REMMIE ARNOLD

THE SHRINERS' IMPERIAL POTENTATE

By Harry T. Brundidge

DETROIT was honoring a distinguished guest — Rimmie L. Arnold of Petersburg, Virginia, Imperial Potentate of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Before the banquet (and this was only a few weeks ago), there was a reception for Mr. Arnold in his Presidential Suite at the Hotel Statler. The rooms were crowded with automobile executives and other important Detroiters. As one of the guests inhaled the fragrance of a julep he turned to Mr. Arnold and asked, "Have you been in Detroit before?"

The Imperial Potentate smiled as he answered. "Yes, I've been here several times, beginning away back

in 1914 when I came here to see Henry Ford."

"Mr. Ford? You came to see him?" the questioner went on.

"Yes, I did," Arnold replied, "and

I'll never forget that visit. I didn't stay at the Statler that time, but at a 25-cent flophouse. I was about twenty and ambitious. I had read in my hometown paper that Mr. Ford was going to pay a fabulous \$5-a-day minimum wage. I wanted one of those jobs. I did

not have any money, so I hoboed my way from Petersburg to Detroit. I'd done that before, seeking other jobs, all over the country."

"Did the Ford plant hire you?"

