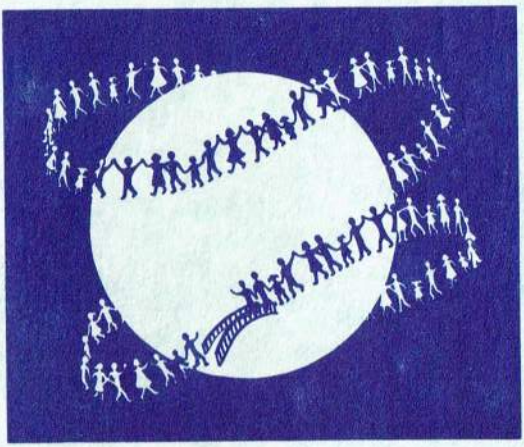
NUCLEAR STRATEGY AND THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE



by

Robert C. Aldridge

Booklet 4

WAGING PEACE SERIES

Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

WAGING PEACE SERIES

We wish to introduce you to the Waging Peace Series. As far as is known, the term "Waging Peace" originated with Warren Wells, late husband of Ethel Wells of Santa Barbara, in a letter to President Eisenhower. It was a long-standing practice of Mr. Wells to keep in close touch with key national figures and give them his views on peace issues as well as other vital matters. This series is dedicated both as a memorial to him and in gratitude to Mrs. Wells for her continued efforts in this cause.

Just as peace is more than the absence of war, waging peace is more than supporting arms reductions. In addition, it embraces positive steps toward genuine harmony. In this series the Foundation will distribute short booklets stressing ideas for attaining peace. Some publications will be scholarly, others more popular in style—most will combine elements of both. Concepts expressed will include views of many authorities, and will not necessarily be those of the Foundation.

Suggestions for topics and your reactions to this issue are welcome. Quantity lots are available at minimal charge from the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

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THE AUTHOR

Robert C. Aldridge, age 58, is an aerospace engineer who worked sixteen years for Lockheed Missiles and Space Company designing submarine-launched strategic weapons. He resigned from that position when he recognized the aggressive trend in nuclear weaponry. For the past twelve years he has pursued private research, writing, lecturing and consulting with the aim of helping people better understand the nuclear arms race and the military-industrial complex. During World War II he was in the Army in the Pacific and is a combat veteran of the Phillippine campaign. Besides being a consultant to Pax Christi/USA, The Center on Law and Pacifism and other organizations, he has written over a hundred magazine and newspaper articles and is the author/co-author of three books. His book *First Strike! The Pentagon's Strategy for Nuclear War* has been printed in the U.S., Britain, Japan and West Germany. He and Janet, his wife of 37 years, have ten children and eleven grandchildren. They have a strong motivation to provide a future for them.

OTHER WAGING PEACE BOOKLETS

1. **Can We Change Our Thinking?** by Charles W. Jamison
2. **Creating a New Institution: A United States Academy of Peace,** by Frank K. Kelly
3. **Preventing Accidental Nuclear War,** by David Krieger

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

■ Through fear of Russia the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed in 1949. The United States has always dominated that alliance.

■ During the 1960s France all but disengaged itself from NATO and started deploying its own nuclear force. It was also instrumental in establishing the Western European Union, a competitive alliance with NATO and dominated by France.

■ Against this backdrop the United States has urged NATO allies toward greater financial commitment. One ramification is Theater Nuclear Force modernization which has introduced Pershing-2 missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles.

■ The defense of Europe under NATO is based on the Flexible Response Doctrine which postulates three escalatory responses to a conventional attack.

■ The first response is with conventional weapons, but is time limited because of available supplies and munitions.

■ When supplies and munitions are near exhaustion the plan is to escalate to the second response, which is limited use of tactical nuclear weapons.

■ But because military leaders are well aware that limited nuclear war cannot be kept limited, the third response is to escalate to general nuclear war involving use of strategic nuclear weapons between the superpowers.

■ The preventive action to this deadly momentum is a new trend in arms reduction negotiation which will involve a sincere approach and encompass the entire spectrum of weapons in all nations.

■ The motivating factor in achieving genuine peace through meaningful negotiations lies in the unflinching will of the people of this planet.

Public discussion of Western European military policy has recently centered on the nuclear Ground-Launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs) and the Pershing-2 intermediate-range ballistic missiles. There is much more to the overall picture, but to most people it is a seemingly incomprehensible subject. The following discussion is intended to touch the highlights of NATO defense policy in order to provide better understanding of that doctrine.

BACKGROUND

On April 4, 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established by a treaty signed in Washington, D.C. The original twelve member nations were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the United States. Greece and Turkey joined during February 1952 and the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in May 1955. Spain, the newest member, joined NATO in June 1982, bringing the total member states to sixteen.

During the latter 1960s, French President Charles de Gaulle declared that France could defend itself. French armed forces were withdrawn from integration with NATO, and NATO bases were removed from French soil. In 1967 France started deploying its own independent nuclear force and to this day maintains unilateral control of that force. Britain also has an independent nuclear force which is assigned to NATO with two reservations: only the British Prime Minister may authorize missile launches, and Britain retains the right to order their launch independently. These restrictions make assignment to NATO a cosmetic gesture.

Despite France's aloof attitude toward participation in NATO, in recent years it has shown a strong commitment to aiding other Western European nations if they are attacked. There is a strong and growing alliance between France and West Germany, as well as other countries, in the form of the Western European Union. U.S. Army

General Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR), opines that "France will come to the aid of other countries in Europe if they are attacked..."[1] Some view the French deployment of nine new Aerospatiale S-3 intermediate-range ballistic missiles with one-megaton warheads as a demonstration of that commitment.

General Rogers, however, says that the only problem he foresees in the Western European Union is that a number of allied nations are not included. Only seven of the sixteen NATO states belong. Besides France and West Germany, they are Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Britain. It is interesting to note that all the NATO nations scheduled to accept GLCMs and Pershing-2s belong to the Western European Union.

One aspect of the Western European Union which is attracting considerable attention is the discussion between France and West Germany about basing French nuclear missiles on German soil. If this were done it would allow French intermediate-range missiles to reach targets in the Soviet Union. Apparently West Germany is holding out for a "dual-key" situation whereby those weapons could not be launched without German consent. It is reported that some Germans favor basing French weapons in their country with the "dual key" arrangment because it would prevent France from unilaterally using those weapons.

Another possible incentive to the stronger ties developing between West Germany and France is that some German officials perceive the United States as being insensitive to European politics. There seems to be too much emphasis to buy American. West German Defense Minister Manfred Woerner points out that "some of the advanced technology weapons will have to be bought in Europe with development here too." He goes on to say: "There are many U.S. weapons on the emerging technologies list. Unfortunately, when we can't swallow everything the U.S. offers, there is then a crisis in alliance."[2]

Woerner also said that stronger ties between allied nations adds weight to the alliance, and he sees the Western European Union as a means of strengthening NATO. And, he added, "France is now the most important nation in this process."[3]

Other Western European allies and some U.S. officials don't agree. They see this as a move by France to assume the dominant role in Europe, which would erode U.S. leadership. They fear that NATO allies will eventually be divided into two factions with France, allied with West Germany, controlling one and the United States leading the other. This is especially true if French influence determines the industrial teaming for developing weapons.

It is against this political backdrop that NATO modernization must be viewed.

NATO MODERNIZATION

I will divide NATO modernization into two general areas. First is the introduction of longer range theater nuclear forces—the Pershing-2s and the GLCMs. In December 1979 fourteen of the fifteen member states of NATO (Spain had not yet joined) agreed in principle to deploy these U.S. weapons in Europe. 108 Pershing-2 launchers are to be stationed in West Germany. 464 GLCM launch tubes are to be distributed throughout Western Europe: 160 in Britain, 112 in Italy, 96 in West Germany, and 48 each in Belgium and the Netherlands. Deployment started in December 1983. It is these weapons which French intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Germany would compete with.

Although there are specific goals in mind, the remainder of NATO modernization (the second general area) is basically measured in increased weapons spending—a good share of which is presumed to go to the United States for advanced technology weapons.

NATO's military forces are planned over a six-year period and the planning is reevaluated every two years. Modernization plans are decided in a collective sense under the aegis of the Allied European Command (ACE). The 1983-1988 goals called for a 4 percent annual increase in military spending across the board, over and above inflationary increases. NATO nations, however, have failed miserably in achieving this goal. The actual increase averaged less than 3 percent.

The NATO force modernization goal for 1985-1990, expected to be approved at about the time of this writing, is reportedly reduced to 3 percent annual real growth in spending. But there is much skepticism that the European members of NATO will be able to meet even that.

One of the main priorities of this modernization is to increase war reserve supplies of ammunition and other materials in order to sustain 30 days of warfare. Although the United States does have that reserve for its three Army divisions in Europe, NATO as a whole is nowhere near that capability. In case of actual combat the U.S. would have to transfer American stocks to its allies. This lack of war reserve is advanced as the reason the United States and its allies cannot subscribe to a no-first-use policy for nuclear weapons.

ALLIED COMMAND EUROPE (ACE)

ACE is the military deterrrent of NATO and has its headquarters at Casteau near Mons, Belgium. It consists of six sub-commands—four land and two air:

- *Allied Forces Northern Europe* with headquarters in Kolsaas, Norway defends from the northern tip of Norway to the Elbe River in Germany, including areas of the Arctic Ocean and the Baltic Sea.

- *United Kingdom Forces* with headquarters in High Wycombe, England protects reinforcement routes to Eu-

rope, NATO forces in England, and contributes to allied air power.

■ *Allied Forces Central Europe* is headquartered in Brunssum, the Netherlands and defends the heartland of Europe from the Elbe River south to the Alps.

■ *Allied Forces Southern Europe* has its headquarters in Naples, Italy and defends from the Strait of Gibraltar to the eastern border of Turkey. It includes sizeable areas of the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

■ *Allied Air Forces Central Europe* has its headquarters at Ramstein Air Base in West Germany. Its operating area is West Germany, Luxembourg and part of Belgium.

■ *Allied Air Forces Southern Europe,* with headquarters in Naples, has an operating area including the mainlands and islands of Italy, Greece and Turkey.

In peacetime these sub-commands remain under their national commanders. During hostilities or crisis situations all of these forces are integrated and committed to the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR). At present the SACEUR is U.S. Army General Bernard Rogers.

FLEXIBLE RESPONSE DOCTRINE

Having grasped some understanding of the organization of NATO forces under the aegis of ACE, the next step is to examine the military strategy under which these forces would be employed. General Bernard Rogers, SACEUR, defines such employment as the "deterrent strategy" of "flexible response."[4]

The flexible response strategy envisions three levels of response. The first is direct defense with conventional weapons. The second response is a deliberate escalation to first use of tactical nuclear weapons. These, presumably, would be employed in a selective and limited sense. And the

third response is the general nuclear war response or, as General Rogers describes it, "the strategic nuclear exchange between the homelands of the Soviet Union and the United States."[5] I will describe each of these responses in more detail.

The First Response: Conventional Warfare

A good share of the people in the United States and Europe believe the primary tactic for conventional warfare in Western Europe is the U.S. Army's doctrine called "Air Land Battle." That is not necessarily true, but let us examine that doctrine because much of it does apply. It is primarily an Army battle plan which depends heavily on Air Force support. A land battle would not last more than 3 days without that air cover. This is not too different than past tactics except, according to Army officials, for the high mobility and deep strike. The plan envisions three aspects: rear area battle, direct battle, and deep battle.

Rear area battle essentially protects allied command, control and communication facilities as well as support and supply installations. Army leaders envision Soviet or Warsaw Pact units up to brigade size being delivered by air to attack these assets. It is this type of infiltration behind allied lines which rear area battle is supposed to offset.

Direct battle is close-in combat at the forward line of troops. It is described as highly mobile forces (tanks and armored personnel carriers) being able to maneuver quickly to outflank the enemy and maintain the initiative. This is supposed to keep the opponent in a reactionary mode. It is direct battle that is expected to be the decisive factor in combat.

Weapons for direct battle, at least for the present, are the first generation wire-guided anti-armor weapons such as the TOW missile; and the now-being-deployed second generation laser-guided anti-tank munitions such as the Hellfire missile and the Light Anti-tank weapons. Air

defense weapons include the Patriot surface-to-air missile, the Anti-Tactical Missile and the Stinger shoulder-launched missiles.

Deep battle is designed to bottle up second-echelon and follow-on forces at geographical choke points and destroy them. Weapons being developed for this purpose are the third generation "fire and forget" missiles and submunitions which autonomously search for and destroy tanks, personnel and airfields. Remotely piloted air vehicles are planned for intelligence and reconnaisance along with special radar command aircraft. Lt. Gen. Fred K. Mahaffery, U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff, claims that attacking deep is essential to winning and cannot be separated from close-in fighting.

The Air Force supports the Army by defending the air space, providing air support for ground operations, destroying rear echelon forces, employing electronic warfare, and providing tactical command and control under certain conditions.

As I pointed out, Air Land Battle is a U.S. Army doctrine, not a NATO plan. General Rogers explained: "Should a war be fought in Western Europe, it would be an alliance coalition effort directed by SACEUR through the major subordinate commands of ACE. The ACE concept of operations . . . is for use throughout the command. It is by no means a concept which can be ascribed to any one nation, but is wholly an ACE product."[6] Neither the nearterm Air Land Battle plan nor the conceptual "Air Land Battle 2000" should be confused with ACE doctrine. ACE reflects the thinking of the staff of other nations. It uses the best from each of the allies' doctrines and in that sense much of the Air Land Battle plan is applicable. It is probably most applicable to the three U.S. Army divisions.

There are parts of Air Land Battle that are not applicable or are not adequate for Europe. One example is the deep battle aspect. General Rogers would like the capability to strike 400 kilometers (250 miles) behind the front lines but says he would settle for 300 kilometers (185 miles). The weapons being developed for Air Land Battle will come nowhere near that range.

One concept for deep strikes being pursued by a U.S./Britain/West German consortium (Boeing/Marconi/Messerschmidt-Boelkow-Blohm) is a conventionally armed cruise missile, possibly air-launched. Another concept is to use ballistic missiles. There have been proposals to put conventional warheads on the first stages of Pershing-2, Trident-1 or MX missiles. This would involve Martin-Marietta, Lockheed or Boeing, but European nations oppose the scheme, ostensibly because the Soviets might believe the ballistic missile, when launched, carries a nuclear warhead. Why an air-launched version of the cruise missile would be less confusing seems to go unanswered.

Nevertheless, it is true that these types of deep strike weapons, whether they be cruise or ballistic, would definitely contribute to the nervousness of Soviet leaders during times of high crisis or in the midst of conventional warfare. In light of U.S. and NATO activities to develop first strike weapons, the Kremlin could well believe that a decapitation strike was under way.

The Second Response: Tactical Nuclear Weapons

Escalation to limited nuclear war is the next step outlined in the flexible response doctrine. As I pointed out above, the sub-commands of ACE fall far short of having even a 30-day war reserve stockpile. The conventional defense is time-limited and that time could be significantly less than 30 days.

It is because of this time limitation that General Rogers, SACEUR, and Ambassador David M. Abshire, permanent representative to the North Atlantic Council, agree that if ACE is attacked by conventional forces that Rogers will

have to seek a nuclear release authority early in the battle.[7] Rogers claims that this first use option is necessary to maintain deterrence.[8]

The first use option is not a new, or even relatively new, doctrine. It is as old as the nuclear age itself. Immediately following World War II it was, at least ostensibly, the U.S. threat to use nuclear weapons which prevented the Soviet Union from occupying more territory with its vastly superior conventional capability. Letters in the Truman Library indicate that he considered using the atom bomb again to demonstrate America's strength to Russia and China.[9]

There were other times when first use of nuclear weapons was seriously considered and even threatened. In 1953 John Foster Dulles, with President Eisenhower's approval, said atomic bombs would be used if North Korea didn't soon come to terms with an armistice agreement.[10] In 1959 Christian Herter, acting Secretary of State, testified before the U.S. Senate that if the Berlin Crisis developed into war the U.S. "would have to" use nuclear weapons.[11] And then of course everyone is familiar with the Cuban Missile Crisis.

During 1974 the Nixon Administration introduced the targeting doctrine of "selectivity and flexibility." It was perhaps at this time that Congress first saw clearly the military's plan for flexible options and limited nuclear war.

In 1975 the heretofore clandestine first use policy became publicly known when the Ford Administration declared that the United States might have to use nuclear weapons first to stop massive conventional advances in places such as Europe. Defense Secretary James Schlesinger was quoted as saying that the U.S. might even make first use of *strategic* nuclear weapons against selected targets in Russia.[12]

Early in its term the Carter Administration issued Presidential Directive No. 18 (PD-18) which initiated a sweeping review of U.S. war planning. This study resulted in numerous presidential directives including PD-59, which codified the concept of limited nuclear war.

The Reagan Administration adopted PD-59 and enlarged upon it with a Five-Year Defense Guidance Document. Although highly secret, information leaked to the public reveals that this document outlines the procedure for fighting and winning a limited and protracted nuclear war.

While public criticism around the globe was decrying PD-59 and the Five-Year Defense Guidance Document, physicians and environmental scientists were providing hard evidence that nuclear war was unwinnable. This completely discredited any nuclear war planning and seemed to greatly upset the Pentagon. A flurry of statements ensued attempting to justify the validity of nuclear deterrence. The dilemma of military officials was epitomized by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's statement that nowhere "do we mean to imply that nuclear war is winnable... That is exactly why we must have the capability for a 'protracted' response—to demonstrate that our strategic forces could survive Soviet strikes over an extended, that is to say, protracted, period. Thus we believe we could deter any attack."[13]

Weinberger did not clear up that confusing statement when he told the Naval War College a few days later: "We do not believe nuclear war is winnable. However, successful deterrence does require responsible and effective contingency plans should deterrence fail and we are attacked. In those plans we are not planning to lose."[14]

If not planning to lose an unwinnable war is not contradictory enough, Weinberger continued: "The only war we want is the war-which-never-was. But the war-which-never-was is a war which was never fought because we were prepared to fight and win it."[15]

We should not interpret Secretary Weinberger's dichotomic statements as an indication of Pentagon confusion, or even restraint, regarding nuclear weapons. In his professional manner General Rogers said that "one of the major paradoxes that we face right now in the nuclear era is that even though we never want to use them...we have to convey the impression we are ready to use them as a last resort..."[16]

Former U.S. Under Secretary of Defense John Walsh used perhaps the clearest language to describe the manifest will of the United States to use nuclear weapons if deterrence fails. He said: "We do not want to set up a bluff which could be perceived to be a bluff, or even a bluff which we know ourselves to be a bluff and hope it is not perceived to be a bluff. Rather, our forces have to be able to do that which is threatened."[17]

It is in this setting that General Rogers described nuclear first use as a necessary part of ACE plans to defend Europe. Major General Louis Wagner explained that in Air Land Battle, planning for nuclear weapons (along with chemical and electronic warfare) is conducted concurrently with conventional planning. It is no wonder that General Rogers says NATO has mortgaged its defense to the Nuclear response.

The Third Response: General Nuclear War

The third and final (very final) response of the flexible options planning is escalation to total thermonuclear war by employing strategic weapons. This escalation is certain. General Rogers warned that "we cannot maintain a nuclear war in Western Europe. A nuclear war in Western Europe is going to escalate to the strategic exchange. It is just a question of how soon it escalates. I happen to be one who believes, under present conditions, that it is going to escalate very quickly. So that is why we say our general nuclear response, our third response, is in fact the ultimate guarantor of our deterrence."[18]

General Rogers is not alone in this thinking. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, said: "I don't see much of a chance of nuclear war being limited or protracted." He sees "great difficulty" in keeping any kind of a nuclear exchange from escalating.[19] Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara wrote: "It is inconceivable to me, as it has been to others who have studied the matter, that 'limited' nuclear wars could remain limited—any decision to use nuclear weapons would imply a high probability of the same cataclysmic consequences as a total nuclear exchange."[20] Former Defense Secretary Harold Brown told the Naval War College: "We know that what might start as a supposedly controlled, limited strike could well—in my view very likely—escalate to a full scale nuclear war."[21] Even President Ronald Reagan said at a press conference: "If war comes...would the opponents, faced with inevitable defeat, take the defeat without turning to the ultimate weapons?"[22]

The implication here is that once tactical nuclear weapons are employed (the second response), general nuclear war (the third response) is certain. By the same token, once conventional war starts and the inevitable depletion of munitions and supplies is reached, the use of tactical nuclear weapons is assured. Logic then tells us that once conventional war starts in Europe that general nuclear war will follow. Escalation may be so rapid that the intermediate step of using tactical nuclear weapons could be omitted. Following this chain of escalation would be the devastation of this planet by prompt and long-term nuclear effects. Furthermore, this dismal scenario could be aggravated by the independent nuclear forces of Britain and France capable of being deployed unilaterally. There would be just too many minds for the Kremlin to outguess before it starts escalation from its end.

The fate of this earth hangs in delicate suspension. The term "flexible options" is a misnomer. There is no flexibility in the chain of escalation. Neither are there any options once that chain is set off. The only options available are

some critical, even radical, decisions before the fact. It is these decisions which need a closer look.

A CORRECTIVE DIRECTION

General Rogers sees the answer to nuclear dependency as building up the conventional forces. He also alludes to the necessity for serious negotiation. I disagree with the former and concur with the latter. Building up conventional forces merely perpetuates dependency on the military solution. In the history of humanity this approach has consistently failed to bring lasting peace. In effect, it has heightened conflict through the evolution of weapons. It has led to the nuclear problems we experience today. Most of all, it reflects a prevailing attitude of selfishness, and violence to satisfy that selfishness.

Serious negotiations imply a change of attitude which will lead to nonviolent solutions. Negotiations of the past have only been half-serious at best. They have been plagued with two pitfalls. First, the superpowers have never really stopped anything they wanted to do. Negotiations have been more of an attempt to gain an advantage or establish a loophole. This has been possible because the general attitude of the people has not been persistent enough to press for meaningful arms reduction. When a change of attitude becomes widespread as an uncompromising yearning for true peace and security, then there will be enough pressure on governments to fulfill that yearning.

The second pitfall has been the approach to negotiations. It has been a compartmentalized activity. We've had SALT/START, Long-Range Theater Nuclear Force negotiations, Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks, and various approaches to banning or curtailing nuclear tests. Such isolated attempts toward treaties fail to recognize the interaction of theater/tactical nuclear weapons with strategic, or the interplay between conventional and nuclear. Neither will agreements between superpowers alone resolve the problems we face.

At one time retired Admiral Hyman Rickover suggested dividing all the weapons into categories and reducing each category to the lowest level. This is not a particularized approach because the negotiations would encompass all the categories. I like this as a starter because it would address all the weapons simultaneously and work for meaningful reduction. Possibly some or all conventional weapons and platforms would have to be included.

This approach would also include the weapons of all nations. It's not possible for the U.S. and U.S.S.R. to ban theater weapons when Britain and France have independent nuclear forces—or when China is threatening Russia's back door. All nations need to participate because all people are threatened by the nuclear presence. In this sense the United Nations could emerge as the medium for such negotiations.

I realize this description is oversimplified. There are obstacles to consider: geographic advantages, cooperative verification, variations in weapons quality, reluctance of some nations to participate, and many more. But these are not insurmountable obstacles if there is the general will to overcome them.

CONCLUSION

This brings me to what I consider the bottom line in achieving real peace—the unflinching will of the people. It gets back to the change in attitude and governments only being able to do what the people allow. If the military-industrial complex controls government (and I'm not just talking about the United States and its allies) it is only because the people permit it. This permissiveness may stem from a well-cultivated fear or from selfish interests. Fear of an opponent is a well-tested means of rallying support behind government policy. Self-interest causes one to sanction the status quo.

Fear and self-interests are the two overriding obstacles

to abolishing the nuclear danger. As long as Americans believe the Russians are going to bury them, or the Russians think America is going to take over their country, then we both see a need for nuclear weapons. As long as developed countries arrogate to themselves most of the world's resources and wealth, we need weapons to defend that activity.

These are the prevailing attitudes which must be turned around before we can expect serious negotiations. That turning around seems to hinge on a better understanding of the facts along with developing compassion for others. A few people on this planet already have this insight. A heavy burden rests on them to motivate the remainder, if humanity is to have a future.

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