

“No First Use of Nuclear Weapons”

To the Editors: Bruce Russett's article, "No First Use of Nuclear Weapons," in your November issue is a useful analysis of the arguments for and against a proposal that has been buried too long. Our leaders, military and political, have found it easier to threaten to use nuclear weapons than to find less dangerous ways of coping with our security interests. To ask nations to forgo the option of acquiring nuclear weapons without being willing to pledge not to use such weapons against them is an incomprehensible policy. I am particularly pleased that Russett is critical of Ikle's proposal of "no first use of nuclear weapons against cities," which was designed to support Secretary Schlesinger's strategy of threatening to initiate the use of nuclear weapons in a counterforce attack on Soviet ICBMs. I can't think of a more effective way of assuring that the U.S. would be subjected to nuclear devastation.

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To the Editors: The movement for no first use of nuclear weapons, endorsed by Professor Russett in your November issue, would be immeasurably strengthened if it were accompanied by a sound proposal to give U.S. allies fair and equal opportunity to share in policymaking.

Allies are necessary to us; it is, then, only fair to them and to us that they share in the take-off as well as the landing. Until institutions are created giving them just share in the decision-

making process, they cannot be relied upon fully. The whole defense of the West is thus weakened. No system of treaties gives even comparable strength to that of union. Why the difference is so great is not easy to explain, and lies outside the scope of this letter, but history shows clearly that it is so. A better planning mechanism, use of more talent, greater depth of defense, weapons standardization and procedure are important but only partial explanations of why union is much more effective than alliance. The real difference lies in the realm of spirit, elan, morale, and trust.

Justice demands that our allies have a share in the selection of any man or commission who can set nuclear holocaust in motion. They have none now at the top.

Any declaration of the renunciation of first use of nuclear weapons should be accompanied by an invitation at the peoples' level, implemented through the Congress and perhaps the President, but not controlled by either of them, to any and all of our allies interested in consulting with us about how we can build better institutions for greater unity and more effective joint defense.

Dr. Russett correctly asserts that "Asserting civilian control on nuclear questions requires unceasing efforts." A properly organized conference of peoples' representatives to discuss better institutionalization among them would be a reassertion of the peoples' control over their weapons systems, as well as over their destinies. It not only might, but probably would, result in proposals that would increase the chances of avoiding nuclear war and ensuring the survival of freedom everywhere.

Resolutions looking to such dialogue

have been approved by the U.S. Senate in both of the last two sessions. Unfortunately they have failed in the House. They merit the support of all who wish to avoid nuclear war and see an adequate peace system built. I was shocked the first time I heard a fellow citizen say that if Western Europe were attacked, the United States should keep its hands off. That shock continues. The U.S. cannot continue long as a free society without its allies. What our European allies (and I think others) want above all is unequivocal assurance that any attack will be met by the full force of the free world. Outside of union, that assurance cannot be given or received. As a Californian it is more important to me in the case of attack that the Germans be with me than that the Texans be. There are three reasons: (1) Germany is stronger than Texas; (2) it is located nearer the heart of the probable enemy; (3) Texas would be more readily coerced into denying its assistance and resources to the enemy.

Beginning dialogue with our allied peoples on how to build better institutions would increase their confidence in us rather than diminish it, as envisioned in Dr. Russett's Objection No. 2. Better military organization and procedures for selection of equipment would be spin-offs most probably.

As long ago as 1953 the great British historian, Arnold Toynbee, wrote, correctly I'm sure: "We Western peoples no longer have a choice. We are bound to unite with one another considering that our downfall would be the inevitable penalty of disunity" (*Foreign Affairs*, January, 1953).

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