

# worldview

A JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## MLF—A FOCUS FOR DECISIONS

There are proposed, occasionally, plans or policies that challenge the most sturdy political clichés, the most cherished political attitudes and the most far-reaching designs for the future. Whatever the future of the proposed multilateral nuclear force (MLF), many people now regard it as just such a challenging plan.

Described most simply, the MLF would, as initially proposed, consist of a number of surface ships armed with Polaris missiles that would have a minimum range of 2500 miles. This fleet, supported, maintained and paid for by the major participating countries, would be commanded by an Allied naval officer. The crucial distinction of the fleet, however, that which would make this striking force truly multilateral, is that each ship and the missiles aboard would be operated by officers and a crew of several nationalities, no single nationality being able to control any significant single operation. Any decision to use the missiles would be reached by some form of agreement among the participating states.

The technical problems involved in such a venture are regarded as formidable but not insoluble. They follow in turn, however, with no clear lines of demarcation, from larger questions concerning the control of nuclear weapons in Western nations and from the still larger question concerning the near future of Western Europe and its relation to the United States. And these are formidable problems that may yet prove to be insoluble in any terms in which they are now presented, problems that bring into direct confrontation opposing visions of what the world of tomorrow can and should be.

Within the Western community the sharpest differences are those between Washington and Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle's "grand design" is intended to separate Europe from the United States, cement a Franco-German friendship, force England to choose between the United States and a United Europe under French guid-

ance. ("I intend to guarantee the primacy of France in Western Europe," de Gaulle wrote in his *Mémoires*.)

To those who regard Jean Monnet as the architect of the emerging Europe, de Gaulle remarks loftily that the baggage car always follows the engine; economic arrangements will follow the political lead, not the reverse. He also asserts forcefully that a great nation-state cannot delegate to another responsibility for its destiny; this is reason enough to justify the *force de frappe*, still generally underestimated and undervalued.

The plan of the United States (formerly termed the "Kennedy design") envisioned, in the most general terms, the gradual formation of a United Europe which would include England and which would have close interests and ties with the U.S. Since the interests would be so close, the U.S. nuclear deterrent would serve to protect Europe from military aggression, primarily through the agency of NATO. But because, as de Gaulle rightly said, no nation will choose, where there is an alternative, to depend on another for its survival, there must be some means of sharing decisions in the employment of the West's great nuclear power. The MLF is one attempt to find such means, acceptable both to the U.S. and to European nations.

The conflict between these two designs involves issues of major importance, and it is far from certain that they can be resolved. If we try to follow one single issue as it threads its way through the controversies, we see how soon it becomes entangled with the others. The place of Germany in any Europe of the future is, for example, of crucial importance.

There is no nation that would now look upon an independent German nuclear force with equanimity—not the United States, not Britain, not France, not the USSR. It would not, in fact, be favorably regarded by most Germans. Yet Germany, no less than France or any other self-

regarding nation, must look to its own interests, its own defense. De Gaulle purports to offer Germany a place in a European coalition free from Anglo-Saxon domination, but as a junior partner which would follow French leadership. This, he suggests, is better than relying on the United States, which may seek better relations with Moscow at Germany's expense.

Given the immediate choice, however, it seems clear to German leaders—as it does to almost all but the Gaullists—that Germany's interests can be better protected through strengthening its ties with the U.S. The question of German reunification is not to be more readily resolved by cutting Germany free of American support and interest. This lends weight to the argument of those who say that there are sound reasons why the German Federal Republic would choose to cooperate in the MLF. And it would be natural and relatively easy to add to Germany and the U.S. other countries such as Britain, Italy and, with a large question mark, France.

The arguments that run counter to this are, however, potent and persuasive. Put simply in terms of questions: "Would Germany attempt to use its measure of control in the MLF to further its own, presently inhibited, desire for independent nuclear power?" "Would the United States be giving over to a possible veto its own power to make the crucial decision to use nuclear weapons?" Or, conversely, "Could the United States be drawn unwillingly into nuclear conflict by decisions of the other participating nations?"

In whatever form these questions are posed, what they actually do is to direct attention once again to the problems any nation-state faces when it considers an alliance, coalition, or federation which appears to demand that it yield up a measure of its sovereignty. This is the hard crux on which have shattered many pleasant theories of international cooperation. The MLF is not going to be an exception to these general and durable problems.

If it proves eventually to be a viable concept it will be simply because the political reconstruction of Europe will make it not only desirable but possible. But even if, eventually, the present concept of the MLF is discarded, an intensive examination of its possibilities and its problems will be valuable, for such an examination will reveal how closely intertwined in any such concept are the technical, military, economic, and political problems of the nations of the Western world.

## THE PROGRAM OF CRIA

This issue of *worldview* is devoted primarily to various problems of the modern nation-state. In his discussion of the implications for the religious citizen, Gordon Zahn refers to the Council on Religion and International Affairs (CRIA)—which publishes *worldview*—and to the seminars which it conducts. For the benefit of *worldview* readers who are unfamiliar with the CRIA program it seems well to offer some background for Mr. Zahn's reference.

CRIA was founded fifty years ago as an independent, non-sectarian organization. Drawn together by Andrew Carnegie, distinguished Protestant, Catholic and Jewish leaders asserted as a group that the faiths which they represented could—and should—make a substantial contribution to the international affairs in which our country was to be increasingly engaged.

The purpose of the Council has remained constant over the years. It has always attempted to implement the conviction of its charter trustees that the insights of religion must inform any sound attempt to cope with the harsh and complex problems of international life. The Council believes that we will make no progress towards the goals of peace, justice and order in the international sphere unless the moral imperatives to which we give public allegiance are related to the realities of power.

The program of the Council is designed to stimulate among those who share these presuppositions discussions of present urgent problems at a sustained high level. As one part of this program it brings together in various forums men of differing and often opposing views—the liberal and the conservative; the "idealist" and the "realist"; Catholic, Protestant and Jew. The Council brings these people together in seminars across the country in groups of thirty to forty to discuss, under a general rubric of "ethics and foreign policy," particular topics ranging from the morality of nuclear warfare to the ethics of intervention. It is to these seminars, which attempt to place foreign policy within a moral context and also relate it to the democratic processes of our country, that Mr. Zahn refers.

*worldview* will be pleased to send additional information about these seminars, and other aspects of the CRIA program, to any readers who are interested. A card requesting such information addressed to the editor of *worldview* will be sufficient.