Book Reviews

Strategy in the Missile Age. Bernard Brodie. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J., 1959. vii + 423 pp. $6.50.

In the nuclear era there is less excuse than ever—if there ever was any—for thinking of strategy as the science of conducting a war that has already started, toward an end that is taken for granted. Strategy must be as much concerned with the *threat* of force as with its application. Deterrence, nuclear blackmail, limited war, accidental war, arms agreements, and the problem of credibility epitomize the modern meaning of strategy.

So defined, strategy is a backward science. We do not even have a rudimentary common terminology to cover the different cases of deterrence that are continually being discussed. In these circumstances, it may underrate Brodie's book to say that it is the best available. There are remarkably few good books on strategy, and even few books at all. Part of the reason is beautifully laid out in Brodie's early chapters. This is an "intellectual no-man's land," traditionally avoided by the military who have shied away even from strategy in the more restricted sense. It is equally true, Brodie points out, that the civilian side of government has been reluctant to equip itself to deal with strategy.

There is nothing very strange about this. We do not expect business executives to produce management science or navigators to produce astronomy; and we should not expect military officers, whose jobs require them to be executives, engineers, bureaucrats, and leaders of men, to produce a body of theory. It may well be the lack of an academic counterpart to the military profession that explains the slow development of strategy. Part 1 (about 150 pages) is a perceptive and absorbing review of the role of strategy and strategists from Napoleon to the Strategic Bombing Survey, with particular emphasis on air strategy during the period since World War I.

Brodie's book is at once the most advanced comprehensive treatment of strategic problems and the closest thing to a textbook in a discipline so unorganized that it lacks even this mark of respectability. Part 2 (roughly 250 pages) is a knowledgeable, balanced, and responsible discussion of current strategic issues as they involve the long-range striking forces of the United States. (This includes limited war, but principally in its relation to the strategic background—a background that ordinarily receives too little emphasis.)

Part 2 may not contain much (except evident wisdom) that is altogether novel to anyone who has kept up with what little good literature has been produced in recent years, a literature to which Brodie himself has been a main contributor. Issues that can be discussed within 250 pages, even lucid and well organized pages, are bound to sound pretty basic and familiar to professionals, unless the author has some favorite gimmicks. Brodie has no gimmicks. But press conferences, congressional hearings, and the writings of military commentators so rarely come up to the intellectual level that can be achieved within the scope of 250 intelligently written pages that Brodie's book might be considered advanced reading. For the nonprofessional, whose stake in these matters is only his life and civilization, *Strategy in the Missile Age* is intellectually accessible, written with a dignity and good taste that inspire confidence in the author's sense of responsibility, and enlightened by a rare touch in the use of historical perspective. (The introduction is a masterpiece.)

If a distinguishing theme or message has to be singled out, it is that the most urgent problem, now and continually, is to ensure the invulnerability of our strategic retaliatory forces, which cannot deter an attack on the United States if they can be destroyed in the act they are intended to deter, and which can hardly rely on anticipating an attack and retaliating in advance. Brodie's main premise is that general war is possible, terribly possible if our strategy is poor, because the technology of modern surprise attack may not make the initiation of general war anything like suicide unless the side being struck has taken this problem seriously, and because the very fear of being second might at some time make going first seem a conservative policy for the enemy, unless he knows that our strategic forces need not strike first to avoid their own destruction. In the last 12 months or so, this concern has spread rapidly in the United States, but the opposite view was widely taken for granted scarcely 2 years ago.

To those who, influenced by the accounting practice of modern press conferences, already think of Atlas as yesterday's weapon, or to whom the commissioning of the first ballistic-missile submarine (without its missiles) makes land-based weapons uninteresting, the book may seem old fashioned. It even discusses airplanes. But anyone worried about the several years we must live through next, and interested in decisions still to be taken for the years after that, will find the analysis not only timely but a reminder that we cannot get beyond the near future without living through it. And before anyone anticipates the early obsolescence of Brodie's analysis he should reread Brodie's own chapters in *The Absolute Weapon*—a book he edited less than a year after Hiroshima, chapters that looked way over the horizon into the nuclear era. His record is awfully good.

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Methods of Experimental Physics. vol. 6, *Solid State Physics*. Part A: Preparation, structure, mechanical and thermal properties. xvi + 466 pp. $11.80. Part B: Electrical, magnetic, and optical properties. xiv + 416 pp. $11. K. Lark-Horovitz and Vivian A. Johnston, Eds. Academic Press, New York, 1959. Illus.

In this 900-page, two-part volume something is said about the techniques for making essentially all physical measurements in solid state physics. Each of the 68 experts contributing to