Primer on International Coercion

Leonard S. Rodberg

Beginning about a decade ago, there was an upsurge of interest in problems of nuclear strategy and especially nuclear arms control. This interest on the part of the public and the professional analysts was occasioned primarily by the advent of thermonuclear weapons, with their capacity to destroy whole urban societies, and long-range missiles, with their potential for nearly instantaneous delivery of this vast destructive power. At the same time there was quickened international interest in a nuclear test ban and in the possibilities for further arms-control agreements which such a ban would portend.

Today it is evident that the attention of the public and the specialists has shifted from the vastness of nuclear warfare to the subtleties of counter-insurgency warfare. We are now accustomed to having ICBMs around, and it is far more difficult to excite concern for the dangers they bring than it was when they were not yet an everyday fact of life. Also, the signing of the partial test-ban treaty has (with some conspicuous exceptions) eliminated the emotional issue of nuclear fallout, which fed much of the interest in nuclear arms control. But perhaps most important has been the expansion of the war in Southeast Asia, grabbing the attention of the concerned public and of national officials to the extent that difficult and, unfortunately, easily postponed issues such as those of arms control have tended to become neglected.

An early and highly creative leader in the intellectual ferment surrounding nuclear strategy and arms control was Thomas C. Schelling, currently professor of economics and acting director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University. In his books *The Strategy of Conflict* (Harvard University Press, 1960) and *Strategy and Arms Control* (Twentieth Century Fund, 1961), the latter co-authored with Morton Halperin, he developed many of the concepts which underlay U.S. efforts to achieve progress in arms control. Such notions as the shared interests between potential adversaries in a nuclear age were developed and refined, although often in a manner more suited to the retention of substantial forces than to the arms-reduction agreements which might have had more chance of successful negotiation.

In his new book **Arms and Influence** (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1966. 303 pp., $7.50), Schelling pursues some of the themes treated in his earlier work. In discussing aspects of nuclear strategy, problems of miscalculation in crises, and communications between opponents in an arms race, he frequently has provocative and penetrating comments to make. However, these are more postscripts to his earlier writings than major new contributions, and, while they exhibit brilliance and imagination, they also display a narrowness of view which is evident throughout the book.

The chief focus of this book is on techniques for conducting limited warfare, especially as it affects the U.S. conflict with Communism. Like most Americans who are concerned with these matters, Schelling has shifted his attention to the nonnuclear conflicts which are so engaging our attention today, and the views presented in this book may well provide the intellectual foundation for the dominant mode of thinking in our military and diplomatic services today—although whether this thinking is shared by the mass of the American people or by the remainder of the intellectual community is more uncertain.

The book deals primarily with the means by which the United States can use its vast armed power to bend other countries to its will. (In fact, a more appropriate title for the book might have been "Arms and Arm-twisting," for the effects of this process upon U.S. "influence" in the world are not discussed.) Schelling defines and analyzes the practice of "coercive warfare," of using what he calls "the power to hurt" to achieve our ends and, in particular, to produce the desired behavior on the part of an opponent. One of the properties of the weapons provided by modern technology (especially those involving the use of air power), in contrast with most traditional means of warfare, is that they are better suited for inflicting punishment than for acquiring territory. The United States is today preeminent in these forms of warfare, and Schelling provides a kind of primer in their effective use.

He places great emphasis upon the use of these weapons for bargaining. In his preface he points out that "the power to hurt—the sheer unacquisitive, unproductive power to destroy things that somebody treasures, to inflict pain and grief—is a kind of bargaining power, not easy to use but used often." Lest the reader think that destruction per se should be the goal, he observes that "coercion depends more on the threat of what is yet to come than on damage already done. . . . This is why coercive warfare, unless it gets altogether out of hand and becomes vengeful, is likely to look restrained."

To provide a conceptual foundation for this type of warfare, Schelling introduces the notion of "compellence." Unlike deterrence, which is intended to prevent an adversary from "starting something," compellence is intended to make him "do something." While deterrence tends to be passive, compellence is intended to make an opponent *act*. It is thus a concept ideally suited to a United States which, throughout its history, has preferred action, initiative, and the offensive military arm and shunned patient, evolutionary, undramatic policies. It is also well suited to a United States which finds itself the dominant military power in the world today at all levels, from general thermonuclear war to jungle operations with rockets, napalm, and helicopter-borne shock troops.

Schelling discusses the requirements for successful compellence, and in some ways he is quite realistic. For instance, he notes that special efforts will have to be made to assure the opponent that, if he accedes to our demands, he will indeed achieve the ends that are promised. However, he neglects major and possibly determining factors that will affect whether the policy, which is in many ways simply a more violent form of psychological warfare, can ac-

The reviewer is associate professor of physics and associate chairman of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Maryland, College Park. In a previous position he worked on problems of arms control and disarmament.

tually succeed. Thus, he fails to examine the forces that will be acting on the opponent and leading him to move, or not to move, in the direction we wish. The adversary will undoubtedly have political commitments he must meet, allies he must support, or allies whose support he must continue to receive. While Schelling points out that one of the more significant features of modern warfare is the passionate involvement of millions of people in its outcome, he does not consider what effect this will have on the possibility of successfully carrying out coercive warfare. Can the masses be as easily coerced as governments, or can the spirit of patriotism be used instead to resist even extreme coercion? Furthermore, can even governments, with their complex lines of internal responsibility, party pressures, and individual ambitions, be successfully coerced before the level of warfare grows altogether beyond rational limits?

The major failing of this book, though, is its lack of human understanding. (It has been suggested by other commentators that this failing can also be seen in the present foreign policy of the United States, which strongly resembles the policies described by Schelling.) People seldom "give up" once their pride and honor have become involved. Schelling notes that the United States, when itself placed under a compellent threat in the 1958 Quemoy crisis, simply dug in its heels and intensified its determination to resist. Might not our opponents react in the same way? He notes that "skill is required to devise a compellent action that does not have this self-defeating quality," thereby assuming, without proof, that there is a solution to this incomparably difficult psychological problem. Recent history does not offer great hope that nations committed to ideals and goals in which they believe will easily concede defeat, or that the United States is especially adept at understanding the internal psychology of its Communist opponents.

This book presupposes that the position of the United States in influencing world affairs is based upon its military strength. It is concerned with maximizing the effectiveness of that strength, but does not consider other aspects or values in the U.S. political position. In fact, nowhere does it take account of what must be apparent to anyone who examines the world today, that the current use of coercive warfare by the United States has profoundly affected the attitudes of peoples and governments towards the United States, as well as the spirit of the American people, in ways which many Americans must find deeply disturbing. The use by Schelling of examples of coercive warfare drawn from the campaigns of Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, and Adolf Hitler does not make one look hopefully toward the future world role of the United States if it indeed chooses to pursue the policies outlined in this book.

Is this the best this country can do with the marvels that modern technology and American ingenuity have made available? Are there not other courses which the United States could pursue that would take advantage of the common desires of the peoples of all countries for peace and economic betterment and would lead toward a more peaceful future than now seems in sight? Schelling, and other associates of the military establishment, have taken the easy way out by simply generalizing from the conflicts of the past. Who is working along new lines, recognizing the revolutionary implications of modern weaponry but also keeping in mind the ideals for which this country has always stood? And who in a position of national power is listening?

Biochemical Symposium

In view of the abundance, diversity, and biological specialization of insects, it is somewhat surprising that so few biochemists have studied them. In **Aspects of Insect Biochemistry** (Biochemical Society Symposium, London, April 1965. T. W. Goodwin, Ed. Academic Press, New York, 1965. 119 pp., $6), several examples of correlation between biological and biochemical specialization are brought into focus by the seven contributors. J. E. Treherne presents evidence that insects and some related arthropods transport water against osmotic gradients by mechanisms independent of the movement of other substances, while transport of monovalent cations across cell membranes occurs by at least two different mechanisms. A very nice correlation between locust development and electron microscopy and biochemistry of the muscle is presented by Th. Bucher. F. P. W. Winteringham briefly reviews the highlights of insect metabolism, with special reference to insecticides and the differences between insects and higher organisms. The intermediary metabolism of insect fat body, an organ somewhat analogous in function to mammalian liver, is well summarized by B. A. Kilby. Aromatic compounds have particularly important functions in insects, and their metabolism is critically appraised by P. C. Brunet in by far the longest contribution (28 pages) to the symposium. By contrast, V. B. Wigglesworth's paper on insect hormones is merely a three-page summary, but includes the most recent references. The complete text has been published recently elsewhere. X-ray crystallography, in the hands of an expert, can contribute greatly to an understanding of insect skeletal structures; K. M. Rudall discusses his own unique contributions to this area in a thoughtful and provocative review.

This little book is singularly free of typographical errors and is produced to high standards. The symposium itself reflects both the strength and weakness inherent in contemporary insect biochemistry. Significant progress has been made when competent investigators have appreciated the special virtues of insect material. Since such scientists are few in number, it is perhaps inevitable that much of the present subject matter has already been reviewed relatively recently, and by the very same authors contributing to the present symposium. But in addition to the convenience of having scattered data encompassed in one volume, this book should serve the important function of drawing the attention of a wider biochemical audience to recent advances and some outstanding problems in insect biochemistry.

L. LEVENBOOK
Laboratory of Physical Biology, National Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases, Bethesda, Maryland

Geography

J. R. V. Prescott's small volume, **The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries** (Aldine, Chicago, 1965. 190 pp. Illus. $5), is a useful review of the literature (mostly geographical and less than comprehensive, as the author admits) pertaining to frontiers and boundaries. The first chapter, which serves also as an introduction, affords some clarification of terminology and summarizes the concepts of ten writers whose studies have spanned the period 1895 to 1957.