The Politics of Nuclear Secrecy

Quincy Wright

In this book Harold Nieburg not only deals with the effect of nuclear secrecy on the foreign policy of the United States but also presents a detailed description of policy in relation to nuclear energy, with special emphasis on the decision-making process. The great detail with which he presents the opinions of the various countries, governmental organs, and individuals involved in nuclear problems may confuse the general reader, who can hardly perceive the forest because of the trees, but the student may find this detail a most valuable part of Nieburg's **Nuclear Secrecy and Foreign Affairs** (Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C., 1964. 269 pp. $6).

The efforts of the United States to maintain secrecy in the nuclear field, manifested especially by congressional legislation, seem to have had little effect in hampering Soviet development of fission and fusion bombs and the means for delivering them. "No policy will keep the secrets of nature out of the hands of nations capable and determined to put the atom to work" (p. 234). The policy of secrecy, however, seems to have had considerable influence in supporting McCarthyism in the United States, in annoying American atomic scientists, and in causing friction between the United States and its NATO allies by somewhat delaying their progress in the field. Soviet restrictive policies in the field seem to have had similar consequences, especially in augmenting friction between the government of the Soviet Union and that of Communist China.

The secrecy issue has been involved in United States foreign policy debate, not only with respect to NATO unity, but also with respect to the development of President Eisenhower's atoms-for-peace policy through the United Nations and alternative policies of massive retaliation or graduated deterrents for defense and in support of diplomacy. In general, the executive authorities in the United States seem to have felt that restrictive congressional legislation hampered their diplomacy in dealing with potential enemies and friends, in developing NATO military policy, and in carrying out the atoms-for-peace policy (p. 179). Some members of the administration relished these restrictions because they provided a good excuse for discriminating among the NATO allies (pp. 172 and 181).

The confusion and inconclusiveness of these debates underline the point made by Hans Morgenthau in his introduction, that the magnitude of change in the conditions of international relations since World War II, paralleled only by the changes that accompanied the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the breakup of medieval Christendom, has made extraordinarily difficult the process of adjusting our thinking to present conditions. "There exists then a gap," he writes, "between what we think about our social, political, and philosophical problems and the objective conditions which the nuclear age has created. . . . Where is the alternative to nuclear *laissez-faire* and nuclear monopoly? Our inability to find the answer to that question, in full awareness of the risk of not finding it and in spite of our search for it, constitutes the tragedy of our nuclear policy" (pp. xiii and xiv).

Among the topics on which Nieburg presents detailed information is that of the transition from a United States policy of nuclear monopoly with threats of "massive retaliation" to that of nuclear stalemate and graduated deterrents with inconclusive debate on the role of "tactical nuclear weapons." There has also been the transition from a policy of unifying NATO through United States control of nuclear weapons and shared contributions of ground forces to that of a joint nuclear deterrent, bogged down, however, by inconclusive debate about whose finger should be on the trigger and whose on the safety catch and about what freedom should be allowed for independent deterrents among the allies. There has been another transition in United States policy from that of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons by monopoly and secrecy, to that of modified collaboration in nuclear development and control among the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, to that of control through supervision by the International Atomic Energy Agency under the atoms-for-peace program, and finally to a policy of common action by the present "nuclear club" (the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom) through the test-ban treaty of 1963—to which, however, France and Communist China have refused to accede.

Changes in the policy of the United States have not been obviously related to changes in its military, political, and economic position since World War II. Immediately after that war, with an atomic monopoly, huge conventional forces, and an economy virtually undamaged by the war, the United States hoped to pursue a policy of maintaining the *status quo* through the United Nations and the rapid dismantling of our conventional forces. Fifteen years later, with a position of nuclear equality vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, inferior conventional forces, an economy developing less rapidly than those of Germany, Japan, and the Soviet Union, and an unfavorable balance of payments, it sought, by nonrecognition and propaganda, to stimulate revolt in "captive nations" and thereby to change the *status quo* maintained by the Communist states in a third of the world for 15 years.

Nieburg deals in less detail with the Soviet Union's change during this period from the revolutionary policies that it pursued immediately after the war, when it lacked atomic weapons but succeeded in expanding communism in Europe and Asia by the threat and the use of conventional armed forces and subversion, to a policy of peaceful coexistence, tinctured by communist propaganda and subversion, after it had acquired nuclear parity. These changes

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in the foreign policy of the United States and in that of the Soviet Union suggest that the relative nuclear and conventional power position of states is not necessarily related to their pursuit of an ambitious foreign policy of expansion or of a modest policy of maintaining the *status quo*.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the book is its detailed discussion of the emergence of checks and balances in political structures and the conflicts of opinion and policy in the United States among the President, the Congress, the Atomic Energy Commission (supposedly an independent agency but sometimes bowing to the President, sometimes to the Congress), and the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Committee, with varying policies according to the fluctuation of party majorities and the efficiency of the President in resolving his conflict with Congress. Also, of great interest, is the conflict in opinion and policy between the members of NATO which was exhibited in the British opposition to a forward United States policy in Indo-China in 1953, in the opposition of the United States to the forward Anglo-French policy at Suez in 1956, in the aloofness of the United States and the United Kingdom from French policy in Algeria during the hostilities after 1955, and in the French and British insistence on independent nuclear deterrents against the United States effort to develop a joint NATO deterrent after 1961.

Finally, Nieburg calls attention to the checks and balances that have developed within the world community as a whole—the United Nations policy of collective security which embraces disarmament, a United Nations force, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the test-ban treaty, and general agreements for international trade and development; the policies of collective defense alliances, especially the NATO and the Warsaw countries, which fluctuate between the attainment of positions of superior strength, stable nuclear deterrence, and local deterrents with conventional forces; and the national policies of independent nuclear capability, bilateral atoms-for-peace agreements, nonrecognition of ideologically opposed governments, and national commercial policies of freer trade, embargo, discrimination, and exclusive customs unions.

The emergence of these checks and balances at all levels of government, as war and revolution receded into the background, tended to frustrate the success of any clear-cut policy seeking rational adaptation to changing conditions, whether that policy was universal, regional, or national. But perhaps these same checks and balances made for static or even dynamic stability. Such stability is generally a function of great complexity of the equilibrium of forces in any situation, mechanical, biological, social, or political, but it is always vulnerable to extreme changes in conditions.

The book deserves study as an illustration of the complexity of the world —of the conflicting opinions and policies of men, nations, and international organizations in a period of transition and of the details of debate and action by which history has been made in the nuclear age. The book is for the specialist rather than the casual reader, and would have profited by a more elaborate index of the subject matter. Footnotes indicate the extensive sources utilized by the author, which do not, however, include currently classified material. The author says in his preface that he declined to apply for security clearance, which was suggested by an official of the defense department, because he "wished to be free of any official restraint in drawing and publishing" his conclusions, and because he "believed that the open record would reveal the politics and purposes of security policy without access to the secrets themselves" (p. vi).

Pharmaceutical Sciences

Medical Pharmacology. Principles and concepts. Andres Goth. Mosby, St. Louis, Mo., ed. 2, 1964. 585 pp. Illus. $11.75.

In a few more than 500 pages Andres Goth surveys the various drug groups and their principal members. His book is simply written, in an informal, chatty style—a pleasant contrast to the devious, labored writing where one forbidding paragraph after another discourages further reading.

The volume is arranged in about a dozen sections, which have general headings like psychopharmacology, anesthetics, metabolic and endocrine agents, and chemotherapy. These systematically cover their respective fields in a traditional manner. In chapters within the sections the subject is usually introduced with a page of general discussion, followed by consideration of the drugs individually. The usual mode of presentation is as follows: An interesting note on history; the chemical relationships; very brief consideration of the mode of action; more on metabolic course and toxicity; and then a touch on therapy. The discussions are as up-to-date as possible considering the meteoric rise and fall characteristic of the paths of individual drugs today.

All told, the second edition of *Medical Pharmacology* should be useful to students and practitioners. No particular faults call for criticism; perhaps the diagrams are at times enough more complicated than the text to invite the selection of simpler illustrations in future editions.

WINDSOR CUTTING
Laboratory of Experimental Therapeutics, Stanford University

Alfred Russel Wallace

Biologist Philosopher. A study of the life and writings of Alfred Russel Wallace. Wilma George. Abelard-Schuman, New York, 1964. xiv + 320 pp. Illus. $6.

Even among biologists, few now know more about Alfred Russel Wallace than that he formulated a theory of natural selection independently of Darwin. In fact, as Wilma George (Mrs. G. M. J. Crowther) makes clear, Wallace made important early studies of several branches of evolutionary biology. His work on zoogeography was most voluminous and has best stood the test of time. Some of his papers on animal coloration and patterns were, however, more original or, at least, less directly Darwinian.

Wallace was right in his own judgment that most of his scientific work was an expansion or a gloss on Darwin's. (The same could be said, without depreciation, of numerous studies of evolution at the present time.) Although he had no delusions in this field, he had an ample number in others. He wrote and worked ardently in favor of land nationalization, socialism, and spiritualism and in opposition to vaccination. Whatever one may think of these causes, Wallace's support