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## The Barometer

Bruce C. Clarke

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# THE BAROMETER

8 December 1979

Editor  
 Naval War College Review  
 Newport, R.I. 02840

In a talk in 1962, soon after I retired as Commander in Chief of our Army in Europe and Commanding General of the Central Army Group of NATO, I said generally as follows:

"Having spent nearly ten years commanding troops facing the Iron and the Bamboo Curtains, I have arrived at certain convictions about the nature of the Communist threat to the Western world.

"BASIC COMMUNIST POLICIES:

1. Keep opponents divided and weak.
2. Exploit weakness, disorder and confusion.
3. Communist expansion is not linked to a time schedule.
4. Encourage and support wars of "National Liberation."
5. Avoid all-out war until they can win.
6. Taking two steps forward, then one back, if necessary, produces a net gain for communism."

I enlisted in 1918 and have served the Army 44 years in uniform and for 17 years since I retired. Our sons and sons-in-law have served in our three recent wars. From this background I have a horror of any major war in which we might be engaged. Neither side can win such a war. Both sides would lose. The effort, expense and inconvenience of preventing such a war are minimal as compared to our cost of fighting it.

A conflict which could start as a conventional war and escalate into a nuclear exchange is far more probable than one which would start as a strategic nuclear exchange.

The keys to the deterrence of such a confrontation are our strengths: Strength in weapons, supplies, strategic transportation, leadership, commandership, tactics, strategy, training, resolve, morale, national spirit and an adequate number of qualified and dedicated officers and men and women available to our armed forces *when they are needed*. If we are to project our military strength across the ocean on either side of us, that strength needs to be in balance to be effective and supportable. It is now out of balance in several of these factors.

Our volunteer system has fallen far short of these requirements. If the Warsaw Pact forces would now make a surprise attack on NATO, it would take at least 3 months to bring selective service personnel to our training camps, plus several more weeks to train them. In the meantime, the personnel needs of our fighting forces would not be adequately taken care of. The war could be over, with our loss, by that time unless we resorted to a nuclear defense. This could escalate into a strategic exchange with horrible results.

There was a Selective Service Registration Bill before Congress. It provided for registering available personnel soon after 1980. They could not be called up until further action by Congress. How would this step help to prevent war?

It would reduce our leadtime to provide adequate and qualified personnel to our armed forces by at least 3 months. It would reestablish in the minds of our opponents and of our allies the resolve, determination and spirit that have made our country great in the past. It would encourage the Western World.

It would very much strengthen our deterrence in the minds of our opponents and would strengthen the hand of our government in its important, diplomatic activities toward the prevention of wars.

It would have a dampening effect on several of the six basic Communist policies listed at the start of this letter.

Frederick the Great said: "Diplomacy without arms is music without instruments."

I am sure that he meant *arms* that are adequate and quickly available, if needed.

/s/ Bruce C. Clarke

BRUCE C. CLARKE  
General, U.S. Army (ret.)

19 December 1979

Editor  
Naval War College Review

Dear Sir:

Like opera singers under exclusive contract, the military performs for its masters, not for others nor even for self-satisfaction outside the terms of employment. Such is the American tradition and it should be preserved.

The Schratz-Winters "Set and Drift" (Sep.-Oct. 79)\* is a false doctrine *per se*, and also wrong as policy since it calls more voices into the national cacophony on defense issues. Our current ailment is democracy-run-amok! It is contagious. Given Vietnam, Watergate and the emerging Judigate, we are a nation of cynics whose attention is sought by too many and given to none.

The authors suspect that military advice is not heard and considered at high levels. I believe that it is heard and discounted at varying rates for various motives. Decisionmakers must listen, question, analyze, think and decide. We seem to recycle the first four and postpone the last. Consider the issue of U.S. Navy shipbuilding. The CNO-SECNAV program is barely presented before it is discounted to a mere opinion and weighted against the contending views of Admiral Rickover, the House Armed Services Committee, the GAO, the Congressional Budget Office, the Senate's Committee, the Brookings Institute [sic] and others. Like the shrill shriek of a cat attacking its prey, this dissonance has almost paralyzed the national will on this issue.

Conceptually, the authors misperceive the role of the military. They inadequately explain the Truman-MacArthur matter. Uncensured, one MacArthur could have poisoned the officer corps, notwithstanding his classic West Point speech entitled Duty-Honor-Country. Our performance must be as the commander desires it, not as we prefer.

Another fault of the note is that it presumes an impartial, calm decisionmaker. Senator Magnuson recently manifested one aspect of the real process in the action he took on the shipbuilding program as it affected the state of Washington. The President's power is heavily delegated and shared, as is that of the Congress. No, those who wish to formulate policy must not represent themselves as trusted executors. When decisions are reached, they must be vigorously carried out, not dreadingly acquiesced in by losing adversaries. Successful execution requires full-time training and preparation of the instruments of execution, undistracted by speechifying before the citizenry or even by composing policy commentary such as this reply.

/s/ W. Donovan

W. DONOVAN  
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

\*"Military Ethics in the United States: Closing the Gap Between Civilian and Military."