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The War System

W. B. Ballis

Bert Cochran

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reorganizations of 1949, 1953, and 1958, showing how each was a further step toward centralization up to the present: "When the current defense agencies are viewed collectively—the eight combat commands, the assistant secretaries who give orders, and the defense agencies—they bear a striking resemblance to the War Department before the Root organization of 1903 Fantastic though it may seem, defense reformers have succeeded in turning the calendar back sixty years and are ready to face the demands of 'modern warfare' with a bureau system similar to one that failed to meet the test of the Spanish-American War!" *The Management of Defense* summarizes reorganizations of defense; it is of value to students in this field. The small book is well footnoted, and has an outstanding bibliography of books and articles in the related area.

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Cochran, Bert. *The War System*. New York: Macmillan, 1965.
274 p.

This polemical book should be read by officers interested in reactions to what is herein termed "the war system." The author reflects a kind of pacifist, antimilitary, nuclear "disarmer" point of view, which is current with large numbers of intellectuals. He argues his case dramatically and flamboyantly. To Bert Cochran, we are caught in a dangerous game played by our military political leaders who themselves are not to blame. The stakes of this game are total nuclear destruction, which the author believes is inevitable as long as the nature of the present military-political complex continues. No longer is the military-civilian dichotomy the existing situation—as it was before World War II. Now the civilian industrialists are interchanged with military leaders and to this mix has been added what Cochran calls "the university and foundation warriors." He argues that this system, enmeshed in nuclear war and strategy, is propelling us willy-nilly into an arms race which, if nations pursue their present course, will end in nuclear annihilation. This book is good on exhortation, but weak on sound historical analysis. The author misreads history and fails to see that our country has not been the causative force in the war system. Our actions have been reactions to the power development of the Communist bloc. A careful reading of our defense budgets until the middle fifties would have demonstrated the weakness in his argument. Regardless of who is wrong, the fact remains that we should all try to substitute peace for war, and reason for force.

And then, and only then, will we be able to alter the collision course of nuclear holocaust which Cochran wrongly argues is now unalterable.

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Millis, Walter. *An End to Arms*. New York: Atheneum, 1965.
301 p.

This is both a powerful and unusual book. Its purpose is noble and its logic quite plausible; it is almost too good, and therein lies the rub. International politics, as described by the author, is a militarized system. Here he is seeking to modify this to a demilitarized system of international politics. He quickly, logically, and rightfully rejects the concepts of general and complete disarmament as a starting requisite. Rather, he determines that the powerful military forces themselves, by their own inutility in settling power conflicts, provide the rationale for a demilitarized system. Disarmament will be accepted as new ways and means of political action are implemented. Drawing heavily from the history of the past seven decades, Mr. Millis deduces a hypothesis which would indicate that the major powers of the world are working toward the use of other than war means to resolve and limit conflicts. He contends that the Clausewitzian dictum, "War is a continuation of policy by other means," should have its emphasis on "other" as opposed to "war" means. As evidence of this situation, the scenario of the nonviolent political conflicts in the Atlantic Alliance and among the Communist nation-states is offered. Having stated his hypothesis, the author, by his own explicit admission, indulges in "science-fiction." He describes in a most rapid and general manner the world of the 1980's. Great conclaves are deliberating about the affairs of the nations south of the equator; the establishment of a world consensus, in limited areas of interest, has been achieved because the alternative is mutual and mass destruction and the military machine is becoming irrelevant.

One cannot help but consider that even though the author's hypothesis is confirmed by the "scientific rules of evidence," there is really no "proof." The subject area is a behavioral science. It would seem that the entire metaphysical substance of man would have to change before the author's prophecy could