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THE CAUSE OF WAR

A lecture delivered
at the Naval War College
on 11 October 1954 by
Professor William A. Reitzel

I was given a firm directive about this lecture. I was to give the subject — *The Cause of War* — a broad-brush treatment, to use the philosophical approach.

This blocked all the easy openings. You can't be philosophical and flippant at the same time. You couldn't, for example, say that the only war with a sensible cause was the Trojan War, since it was about a woman. So what you are going to get is a straight dive into cold water.

The jump-off had better be a look at the extent to which the subject of war and its causes has been cluttered up by partial explanations — all of them laid on weak foundations — and built with strong conviction. A quick run through the literature gives you the following (Refer to Plate 1): Theory Number 1 is the biological, survival of fittest theory — favorite of scientific popularizers; Number 2 is the sociological-anthropological theory — more fashionable at the present time — also Marxist and historical determinism; The third is the classical political explanation — the recurring historical thesis; Number 4 is the long-standing favorite of all democratic societies.

Or, take the case of a much more elaborate analysis — Turner's "Five General Sources of War" (Refer to Plate 2):

"This is a painstaking effort. It doesn't get us beyond a mere list of sources of dispute and areas of conflict in human affairs. As a basis for talking about the Cause of War, it is about the same as saying that 'Boys will be boys'; or that the Mexican War was caused by the existence of Mexicans."

WARS OCCUR BECAUSE

1. Man is a fighting animal
2. Economic and social tensions between groups
3. Only means of settling disputes between states
4. Good and simple Man is led astray by self-interested Rulers -- Kings, Business Men, Munitions Makers, Military Minds, etc.

Plate 1

TURNER'S

FIVE GENERAL SOURCES OF WAR

1. ECONOMIC -- quarrels over territory, trade, fiscal affairs, communication routes.
2. DYNASTIC -- disputes over hereditary claims, rights of succession.
3. RELIGION -- forms of worship, conscientious devotion, fanaticism, intolerance, non-religious concepts.
4. NATIONALISM-- clashes of racial and group pride, envy, jealousy, traditions, patriotism.
5. SENTIMENTAL-- actions in terms of aspirations, sympathy, sense of right, longing for emancipation.

By jumping back and forth among lists such as these, men have been able to develop almost any theory of the cause of war that suited their taste; and, of course, have been able to show conclusively that a particular war supported the theory.

But this is not good enough for a philosophical lecture on *The Cause of War*.

Even more important, it is not good enough for your purposes at the Naval War College. For those purposes, what is said about the cause of war should be useful in making better judgments about the potential for war in a given set of circumstances.

So I want to start more or less from scratch — and I propose to move by the following steps:

First — I want to try to get the problem stated so that it can be examined profitably.

Second — I want to single out some aspects of the problem for separate analysis.

Finally — I want to see if the analysis can be applied to the present state of international relations.

To start with the statement of the problem: It seems to me safe to say that relations between human beings — whether in small or large, whether in loose or tightly organized groups — range back and forth through a spectrum of behaviors: (See Plate 3)

Between Peaceful Cooperation and Conflict, you could introduce a further range — controversy, dispute, etc.

Between Conflict and War, you could similarly introduce a further range — threats of force, show of force, incidents, border skirmishes, etc.



PEACEFUL COOPERATION  CONFLICT  WAR

Plate 3

Each of these represents a normal pattern. None is mutually exclusive. Peaceful Cooperation is shot through with Conflict. Conflict can build up to War; or be dispersed into Peace. Even War can be marked by considerable areas of cooperation. Neither the British nor Napoleon took too stern a view of trading with the enemy. These patterns do, however, differ considerably in their degree of incidence in human relations — with Peaceful Cooperation probably the most characteristic and the most frequent.

We are consequently looking at a problem in which behavior is ranged on a scale, and in which one pattern of behavior is always dissolving into another. The statement of the problem that, to me, best reflects this fluidity in human affairs is:

Why, and under what conditions, does the normal human behavior of Peaceful Cooperation shift to the equally normal human activity of War?

I have a definite purpose in mind in putting the question in this way. I want to emphasize that we are talking about *relatives* and not *absolutes*. We are talking about human behavior and not about a mechanically operating system of cause and effect. Therefore, the question has been phrased to focus attention on the search for the conditions under which Peaceful Cooperation diminishes and Conflicts accumulate momentum and are likely to give rise to War.

Just about twenty-five years ago, I took part as an observer in a study of the social life of apes and monkeys. The London Zoo had just set up "Monkey Hill" — an area of about three acres, in which some 150 baboons, male, female, old, young, were allowed to run completely wild; and observers stood four-hour watches and kept full notes of what happened and why.

I'll give you the end of the story before I sort out the significant details. The end of the story was that "Monkey Hill" quickly became so bloody a shambles that it had to be closed to the public view.

In detail this is what took place:

The natural colony shaped itself into a number of families — an old male, several females with their young, and unattached bachelors. These families lived together in an unstable equilibrium, equally marked by cooperation and tolerance and by daily small scuffles about food and about which males should dominate in the various families. Behavior fluctuated between peaceful cooperation and limited conflict for small objectives.

Only rarely — at intervals of weeks or even months — did small conflicts become infectious and end up in a struggle involving the whole group.

Obviously, the point of interest here was: What happened to push the conflict beyond the point where the group could not revert to peaceful cooperation, but was drawn on into increasing tension until general fighting became the only release — the only means — of achieving a new equilibrium?

Every serious fight started when a female became unattached — that is, when the family control of an old male ceased to be undisputed. It usually began in a simple characteristic scuffle between two males for the possession of the female. The preoccupation of the two males gave openings for other males to try to snatch momentarily unguarded females. Thus the number of scuffles multiplied rapidly, and, as they multiplied, the agitation, excitability, and latent individual aggression in the colony reached higher and higher levels of intensity. The equilibrium of the group became more and more unstable until suddenly the entire community was in violent and chaotic motion.

However, evidences of a new equilibrium gradually began to show. For one thing, the female, around whom the tension had originally started to build up, had literally disappeared from the scene — usually by being pulled to pieces during the fight. Universal violence started to fall off, drifting through a diminishing

series of more and more individualized scuffles, until the colony finally settled down in a new state of balance. Females and bachelors were once more distributed around a limited number of dominant male family heads. A period of peace and tolerance, punctuated by normal daily small disputes, then followed.

Analogies between the behavior of animal groups and human societies have been very cheerfully drawn by any number of writers to the effect that humans, like animals, are always at loggerheads. I am personally dubious about the validity of these analogies. They are all too obvious. The evidence from "Monkey Hill" was much too inconclusive to justify a quick jump from relatively simple baboon circumstances to infinitely complicated human circumstances.

Nevertheless, "Monkey Hill" does throw some light that is relevant to our discussion. The evidence does suggest that the state of equilibrium of a group has a great deal to do with its behavior pattern. Let me summarize:

1. The equilibrium of any social group, whether a small tribe or a modern nation, or an international community of nation-states, is *unstable*.
2. Equilibrium is dependent upon the mutual reactions of all the members of the group. Changes in relation — in status, from decline in strength, from extinction, or merely from change of heart, for no matter what reason — upsets the balance.
3. The climax of the process of adjusting to change and of finding a new equilibrium provides the conditions under which normal conflict gathers force and can become the lead into widespread violence of behavior, or, as we humans call it, War.

This is very different from saying that wars are caused by the fighting nature of man; or by social tensions, greed, com-

petitiveness, and economic disputes. It suggests instead that there is a range of possible social behaviors always available, and that it is *only under special conditions* that the pattern called 'War' can be expected to dominate.

This does not mean the absence of conflict. Grounds of dispute and, hence, of actual conflict, are always present. But the conflicts are resolved at a low level of tension. They do not—by their mere existence—upset the general equilibrium of the community. Conflict becomes significant only if—and when—other forces combine to upset the general equilibrium. Then—and then only—does conflict build up to higher and higher levels of tension.

Let's backtrack for a minute and come at the matter from another angle. Let's move from "Monkey Hill" to human communities.

One line of evidence suggests that there is no great difference between the two. In the case of the BOUNTY mutineers, for example, twenty-six people landed on Pitcairn Island: nine British males, six native males, and eleven native females. The original equilibrium of this group lasted for about twelve months. Then it broke down. A new equilibrium was not reached for nine years. The inhabitants of Pitcairn Island then were one British male, nine women, and twenty-four children. This picture of human behavior is accurate enough as far as it goes—but it is incomplete, one-sided, and, hence, misleading.

Another line of evidence shows that human beings come together in organized groups. These groups are marked by a high capacity for internal peaceful cooperation. This capacity creates a climate in which ethical values and moral codes develop; and a fundamental difference from animal groups appears. Within the organized human group War is a rare occurrence. The prevailing pattern is Peace, intermixed with individualized conflict at a low level of tension. A value called "the common good" is developed

and is culturally transmitted. The force available to the group is applied through rules and institutions by government to the maintenance of internal peace, and to the protection of the group's equilibrium.

This gives you another accurate, but one-sided and misleading, picture. It is the picture, incidentally, that provides the basis of proposals for world government, proposals that envisage the extension of the area of controlled and institutionalized cooperation to the confines of the globe.

However, we don't get a complete and workable picture of human societies until we fit these two lines of evidence together. History tends to show that there is little in the concept of "the common good" that extends beyond a single group. Certainly not enough to check the use of force by one group against another.

On the contrary, there is much in the international community to encourage the use of force in this way. Although the individual potential for conflict is checked within a group, it remains very much alive and is available for use at levels of dispute and conflict between groups.

The observation that a baboon community normally operates in terms of an unstable equilibrium, in which an interplay of peaceful cooperation and low tension conflict is characteristic, can be repeated for human communities. And it can most emphatically be repeated for the modern international community whose members are nation-states. We must, therefore, keep a firm grip on the concept of a spectrum of possible behaviors—and on the picture of one pattern of behavior always ready to dissolve into another if—and when—conditions are right.

In this view, economic disputes, territorial quarrels, class conflicts, competing nationalisms, ideological differences become grounds for conflict. By themselves they do not constitute causes of wars. The cause of war lies in a general breakdown, for what-

ever reason, of an unstable social equilibrium. Under this condition, the transition from conflict to war can — and often does — take place. The transition, however, is not a simple chain of cause and effect. It is rather a dynamic accumulation of mutually interacting factors; and its product is a fundamental and organic change in the pattern of group behavior.

Actually, the shift from a pattern of conflict to a pattern of war has never been an easy one to make. As I said, it involves a fundamental and organic change in the behavior of a group.

The simplest way of accounting for this difficulty is to say that conflict is so customary an aspect of human and group relations that the techniques of dealing with it are built into human and group behaviors and operate almost automatically. But war, in contrast, is a highly specialized form of group activity — particularly so in the modern world. It requires anticipation, organized preparation, and organized maintenance. Even for relatively primitive social groups, war was differentiated from conflict by these requirements. At a minimum, weapons had to be made and stored, food stocks had to be accumulated out of small surpluses, the maintenance of special fighting men had to be organized. For complex modern societies, the equivalent of these requirements calls for such profound and comprehensive modifications in the structure and operation of a society that the deliberate shift to a state of war involves an extreme form of decision.

Modern conditions may have made the shift to war more difficult. But this does not mean that they have in the least reduced the incidence of Conflict in group relations. On the contrary, modern conditions tend to multiply the grounds of conflict and to intensify particular disputes simply because of the increased difficulty of using war to resolve accumulated conflict.

Nor has the growing interdependence of human societies increased the potential for peaceful cooperation. On the contrary, the sense of dependence involved has given rise to fears of ex-

ternal control and to policies of self-sufficiency. Regardless of what your personal experiences may have been, increased ease of communication has emphasized cultural differences and stimulated defensive attitudes in national cultures—thus furnishing additional grounds of conflict. International organizations have neither resolved conflict nor extended the areas of peaceful cooperation. They have merely provided new channels for the operation of whatever potential pattern of behavior predominates.

I hope that by this time our original question— Why do peaceful forms of behavior slide over into conflict and into war?—has taken on a depth of meaning that it may not have had at the start.

With this hope, I now want to move to the second stage of my talk and examine separately some aspects of the problem. I have singled out three: The Function of War, The Limits of Peaceful Cooperation, and The Changing Role of Conflict in the present international community.

The Function of War

If the behavior called “War” is to be distinguished from the behavior called “Conflict,” it will be in terms of the degree of anticipation, planned preparation, and organized conduct that war implies. It was on this basis that the anthropologist Malinowski defined war as—“the use of organized force between two politically independent units in the pursuit of tribal purposes”; adding that, in this sense, “war entered fairly late into the development of human societies.”

Historically, war has served a real function in the relation of states. This function has been differently understood at different times and places. Clausewitz thought of it as a method for continuing state policy, to be used when other methods became ineffective. Walter Lippmann, at one time in his life, regarded it as one of the ways “by which great human decisions were made.”

Quincy Wright suggests that it was a method of violent adjustment, "used for achieving major political changes." And, according to the great imperialist states, the function of war in international society was to extend the range of law and order and to control conflict — not unlike the police function in a national society.

These ends were undoubtedly valid and the means useful when conditions made it relatively simple to move from conflict to war.

It is possible, however, that these purposes — useful and perhaps even rational in their time and place — can no longer be served by war. The technological and organizational requirements of modern war, and the obviously cataclysmic nature of its end product, may have made it virtually impossible for war as a pattern of behavior to function in international society as former wars have admittedly done. Sir John Slessor, in a recent article, even hazards a guess that "war — in the sense of total world war — has abolished itself as a practical instrument of policy." Yet nations must still settle disputes, make adjustments in their relations, and develop an equilibrium. Is it possible that these requirements are being met in terms of conflict? If so, then a new look must be taken at the meaning and character of conflict in contemporary state relations.

Peaceful Cooperation

Before we take this new look at Conflict, however, I want to say something more about the potential for Peaceful Cooperation.

I have no intention here of ending up with an impassioned vision of the universal calm that would follow if only I simply want to call attention to the operation and limitations of this pattern of behavior.

Admittedly, a potential for peaceful cooperation underlies all organized societies. It has made possible the establishment and

maintenance of large areas of law and order in the world. It has made it possible for human groups to develop techniques for resolving conflict and adjusting to change within a nation — electoral processes, constitutional checks and balances, the cultural transmission of the idea of “a common good,” and the police function of government. These techniques, however, have not yet become applicable on a global scale to the international community.

While there were grounds for trying to construct international institutions on the assumption that the potential for peaceful cooperation was increasing, no one of these institutions — neither the League of Nations nor the United Nations — really provided states with the political means of settling disputes, of modifying the *status quo*, or of adjusting relations.

In fact, the international machinery either operated to *preserve* the *status quo* — as in the League of Nations — or involved a concept of *major power policing* — as in the United Nations. And both institutions assumed that Conflict and War differed only in degree, and that Peaceful Cooperation required the complete elimination of War and the drastic control of Conflict.

However, it would be off the beam to conclude that the international community does not contain at least the same potential for peaceful cooperation as any other human grouping. While this potential is obviously at a minimum at the present time, it would be politically ignorant to assume its nonexistence.

A New Look at Conflict

I have suggested three things. First, that modern conditions may make it very difficult for states to shift to that pattern of behavior called “War.” Second, that the potential for peaceful cooperation in state relations is, and may continue for a long time to be, at an extremely low ebb. Third, that the grounds for conflict in state relations have multiplied rather than diminished, while the techniques for controlling conflict between states and

keeping it within bounds — as conflict is continually being resolved within the confines of individual states — do not exist. Yet, the functions of resolution, settlement, adjustment, and search for equilibrium — formerly served by war, but not so served in the 20th century — are as essential as ever to the conduct of human relations.

My sociological and political guess is that, within the framework of threats of war — atomic weapons, massive retaliation, armed forces in being, etc. — these essential functions are now being increasingly served by the pattern of behavior called “Conflict.”

There are some straws in the wind that support this guess. For one thing, the multiplication of conflict has not led inevitably to a raising of the level of tension in state relations. For another thing, the increasing use of force in connection with conflict has not automatically triggered off a state of war. For still another thing, a heightened capacity to adjust psychologically to conflict has become apparent — the absence of settlement no longer leads so quickly to widespread feelings of frustration or to a sense of being boxed in by inconclusiveness. The tolerance of conflict in state relations has definitely increased. The term “Cold War” — although misleading in many respects — is a reflection of this acceptance of conflict as normal.

However, this acceptance of conflict as something to be expected and lived with has not yet been accompanied by a better understanding of the role of Conflict in group relations. We speak of “Cold War” turning into “Hot War” as if the progression from one to the other were automatic and inevitable. Of course, “Cold War” can be replaced by “Hot War”; but only if other factors come into the situation and only if a positive act of decision is made by somebody. We continue to think — unrealistically, in my view — of Conflict and Peaceful Cooperation as mutually exclusive terms. We speak of eliminating Conflict as if this were essential

to the expansion of the potential for Peaceful Cooperation; and, as if it were possible to eliminate Conflict without eliminating life.

My point here would be that we are not confronted by exclusive absolutes in Peace, Conflict, War. We can behave peacefully and still have conflict. We can engage in round after round of conflict without reaching the level of tension that would make us go in for organized war. Instead of exclusive absolutes, I suggest that we are confronted — as all human societies have been confronted — by a range of potential behaviors, all of which are inherent in human relations; and that what we should be concerned with are the conditions — the factors — by which one potential rather than another can become relatively predominant. To think in absolute categories and to plan national action in terms of absolutes seems to me to lead to unrealism, to misdirected effort, and perhaps to failure. To formulate national objectives, policies, and strategies on any such basis is, I suspect, to cut a pretty poor figure in the modern world.

Now let's take a look at this modern world. But, before doing so, let's summarize where we've got to in this analysis. (Refer to Plate 4).

The Modern World

It is important to remember that the international community of the 20th century has some unique features. It is the first "closed" community in history — in the sense that it is co-extensive with the globe. This means that all states, all human groups, are now, whether they like it or not, members of this "closed" system. One and all are locked in a tight relationship — for the very simple reason that there is nowhere else for them to go. Yet, the structure of this community and the relative status of its members is pure historical accident. It became "closed" at a moment in history when a long-standing hierarchy of power, with Great Britain at the summit, was just starting to be sub-

MAIN POINTS SUMMARIZED

1. Co-operation, Conflict, and War are interlocking patterns of behavior.
2. The state of Equilibrium of a Community determines which of these patterns will prevail at a given time.
3. A social Equilibrium is always unstable: its maintenance depends on constant mutual adjustments among members.
4. Co-operation does not create an Equilibrium: it merely works to preserve an existing one.
5. Conflict does not destroy an Equilibrium: nor does it inevitably preclude the development of a new one.
6. War does not lead to a new Equilibrium: it merely sets the stage for one to develop.

jected to undermining trends. Thus, its equilibrium as a community was highly unstable from the start.

Yet, this community had a surface appearance of extreme stability. It had a world-wide fiscal, trading and communications system. It was under widespread and effective political controls. Its potential for peaceful cooperation seemed to be steadily expanding.

Actually, however, its potential for conflict was higher. The political and psychological conditions that favored aggressive behavior were widely present. There were wide disparities with respect to the distribution of the community's resources and there were large gaps in the levels of aspiration and achievement of its members.

At the same time, there was nothing in the past experience of its members to suggest that these disparities could not be modified by war — that is, to suggest that the ends that war had served in preceding centuries could not be equally served by war in the 20th. It was in this context that the steps were taken by which states moved from conflict into the First World War.

However, there were surprises at hand. The totality of war in the 20th century was revealed. The organic effect of technology and organization on state behavior was revealed. The fundamental unbalance of the international community was exposed.

In contrast, the Second World War was moved into in a different way. There is little doubt that the Axis Powers effectively analyzed the meaning of the surprises of World War I. There is equally little doubt that they drew the wrong conclusions from the evidence. They concluded that war could still be made to serve its historical functions if only it were planned, prepared for, and executed more efficiently — and if conflict was deliberately created and manipulated so as to lead into war at a moment and under conditions of their own choosing.

However, in spite of these differences, let me remind you that neither the First nor the Second World Wars provided the basis for a new equilibrium in the international community. Consequently, instead of state relations sliding back from war—through diminishing areas of conflict—to equilibrium and peace, the potential for conflict remained high and tensions rapidly built up again. This was the situation on which German, Italian, and Japanese policy fattened between the wars and on which Soviet policy has thrived since World War II.

The international community is still, therefore, in a condition of fundamental unbalance. The hierarchy of power that the 20th century inherited from the 19th has progressively disintegrated and there is no sign as yet of what the basis of a new equilibrium will be.

Furthermore, the number of dissatisfied states in the international community has increased. These states are not all dissatisfied for the same reasons; nor do they seek satisfaction by anything resembling uniform and coordinated action. Nevertheless, the sum total of the impact of their discontents on the international community is to multiply points of conflict within the community and to impede the development of a new equilibrium.

Yet, no one state—and perhaps even no group of states—is in a political-economic-psychological-military position to impose by war, and to police by force, the equilibrium that it desires.

It is interesting to note that although the pattern of behavior called "Conflict" has steadily increased in scope and intensity through the first half of the century, yet, during the last decade, the pattern has not shifted significantly towards either war or peace. There is evidence to support the idea that Conflict—as a form of state action—may gradually be coming to serve many of the purposes that War formerly served in the relations of states.

One of these pieces of evidence is the fact that force has become increasingly a feature of conflict. In the case of Korea, force was highly organized — organized up to a level formerly associated with war. Yet in general we thought, spoke and acted as if this was plainly not THE WAR. Similar, though not so striking, illustrations can be brought from all quarters of the globe.

There is reason for this growing tolerance of and adaption to conflict. When the disequilibrium of a community is universal, the degree of force needed to clear the way for a new equilibrium is impossible to determine. This difficulty, however, is not so clearly felt in connection with conflict. Here, the ends are limited and localized, and the time span is short. Thus, small adjustments can be sought, aspirations partially satisfied, changes in status partially brought about, and momentary equilibriums achieved.

While it is true that, within a "closed" community, conflicts tend to get interlocked and to infect the entire community with violent motion — don't forget that "Monkey Hill" was a "closed" community — this still does not lead inevitably to war in a human community. Certain key conditions must be present in the situation before this takes place.

These conditions sometimes arise from circumstances over which no group has control — population pressures, technical innovation, etc. Sometimes they are developed by design and as a matter of policy. Sometimes they appear simply because a state officially says, or a national group firmly feels, that they are present — that is, that vital interests, basic security, or fundamental values are threatened.

The implications of this picture of multiplied and intensified conflict would not be complete, however, without a reminder that the Axis powers deliberately and as a matter of policy forced a shift from conflict to war in the '30s. This memory is part of our recent experience; and our reading of the current situation

is undoubtedly conditioned by it. A key question, therefore, is whether or not we are confronted now, in Soviet policy, by a similar deliberate manipulation of conflict towards war.

We should not accept a ready, one-shot answer to this question. It is only too easy to misjudge a pattern of conflict and to call it war. Far too many of the present grounds of conflict in the international community would be present and active irrespective of whether relations between the United States and the Soviet Union were good or bad. Many of the present grounds of conflict between communist and other political groups would continue to exist if the United States and the Soviet Union were both to become completely isolationist. Even some of the present grounds of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union would undergo a considerable reduction in intensity if they were to become disengaged from conflicts that have little basic interest for either state.

The initial approach to this question—and, at the broad level of this lecture, no more than this initial approach can be attempted—is to admit that the assumptions on which the one-shot answers rest can neither be proved nor disproved. Therefore, more evidence has to be looked for; or, better ways of thinking about the available evidence must be developed.

Since I do not expect the evidence quickly to become more positive either way, I am more concerned with better ways of thinking about the evidence we have. I know that the design of your work here is aimed at the same target. So I confine myself to a moderate and very tentative suggestion. It is that we habituate our thinking to the concept of an indefinite period of conflict-behavior between states; and that we avoid focusing our thinking too exclusively on war-behavior.

I can see advantages from the point of view of American policies and strategies in cultivating this habit. A developed sense

of the character, relative intensity, and uses of conflict gives one the means of avoiding exaggerated responses to its incidence. An ability to judge whether or not conflict is increasing or diminishing in intensity, whether or not more and more grounds of dispute are being drawn into a large and coherent field of conflict, enables one to phase one's participation in conflict with more accuracy and economy. A rational tolerance of conflict for what it is — a relatively low level of tension in human affairs — puts one in a better position to judge the significance of particular conflicts and to measure one's interest and design one's actions accordingly.

To observe situations from this point of view, to interpret events and prepare positions in this context, and to act readily and with economy of means in a conflict situation, does not interfere with proper attention to the contingency that conflict may sharpen into war. Nor — and this is equally important to the long-run national interest — does it foreclose on the contingency that conflict may lead to realistic adjustments in the international community and thus to a reduction of the existing checks on the potential for peaceful cooperation.

IN CONCLUSION:

There is always a real danger in a lecture like this one — a broad, philosophical approach to a problem of human behavior. It is that it will come to nothing more than a fooling with words. I have been conscious of this danger throughout. I have continually kept in mind Winston Churchill's minute to the Chiefs of Staff Committee:

“Headquarters seem to be getting more than ever ‘sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.’ It is quite right for Planning Staffs to explore mentally all possible hypotheses, but human affairs are simpler than that.”

And yet, even with such a warning before me, I can not be sure that the danger has been avoided.

The only real test lies in whether or not the intellectual distinctions that have been made are valuable when they are put to use. Then—and then only—will it be known whether a more effective tool has been found for dealing with the realities of contemporary state relations; or, whether one more word game has been put on the market.

Naturally, I think that the suggestions I have thrown out—not dogmas or the final answers, but *suggestions*—will stand up moderately well to the test of use. I have a basis for this conviction. It is—that to see human relations as taking place fluidly within a range of potential behaviors is more likely to lead to appropriate national action than to see human relations in terms of absolutes called Peace, or Conflict, or War.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH

Professor William A. Reitzel

Professor Reitzel was born in Steelton, Pennsylvania in 1901. He received his education at Haverford College and at New College, Oxford, England.

He was Professor of English at Haverford College from 1926 to 1940 and Director, Historical Society of Pennsylvania from 1940 to 1942. In 1942 he entered the U. S. Navy and subsequently served with the U. S. Naval Forces Europe, Staff of Allied Naval Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, Psychological Warfare Section of U. S. Naval Forces Europe, Staff of Commander U. S. Eighth Fleet and the Staff of Commander U. S. Naval Forces Germany. He attained the rank of Commander, USNR, before leaving the Navy in 1947 to become Assistant Director, Yale Institute of International Studies.

During 1948-1950 he was in the Government Service. Since that time he has been Senior Staff Member, Brookings Institution and since 1952 he has also served as Professor of Social Science, Haverford College. At present, he is occupying the Chester W. Nimitz Chair of Social and Political Philosophy at the Naval War College.

In addition to acting as Editor, *Major Problems in U. S. Foreign Policy*, Professor Reitzel has carried out historical and economic studies of the industrial revolution in Great Britain. He wrote *The United States in the Mediterranean* (1947) and *Foreign Information and Publicity* (1948) for the Yale Institute, Foreign Affairs and Policy Studies. He is also author of *The Mediterranean, Its Role in United States Foreign Policy* (1948).