



Valid Concept in Nuclear Age Is Deterrence

By RAY CROMLEY

A CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY study seems to conclude that the greatest risk of nuclear war in the years ahead may come from U. S. actions which convince Soviet leaders we lack determination in a crisis.

The study by Willard Matthias of the CIA Board of National Estimates, says:

"While it is most unlikely . . . Soviet leaders will choose to carry out actions they know to carry a high risk of general war, such knowledge is not easy to come by . . .

"In this age of mobile striking forces and hardened missile sites, it does not appear possible to build a nuclear force capable of destroying an enemy's capabilities and simultaneously protecting oneself . . .

"Even extremely large numbers of high-cost weapons would provide no assurance of victory or even survival. Thus, if there is any valid and rational concept today upon which to develop or measure a strategic military force, it is that of deterrence.

"But one cannot find any rule for determining that a stated level of forces will deter and that another will not.

Deterrence depends, says Mr. Matthias, in very considerable measure on how the enemy sizes up "the determination and will power of his opponent."

The Matthias study gives an example — how the U. S., by seeming to be afraid of a confrontation, set the stage for the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Says this CIA paper:

"In the international atmosphere of early 1962, when the

Cuban move was planned, the Soviet leaders were still riding high and the U. S. probably appeared to them to be uncertain and cautious.

"The U. S. had chosen not to run the political risks necessary to save the Bay of Pigs expedition; the U. S. had accepted the erection of the Berlin Wall with little more than verbal pyrotechnics and the U. S. had accepted the neutralist solution in Laos.

"U. S. formal statements regarding Cuba conveyed an air of studied uncertainty.

"In military planning, despite substantially increased programs of missile deployment, the U. S. was advocating a greater conventional capability and a counter-insurgency program.

"Thus, it probably appeared to the Soviets that the diplomatic and military stance of the U. S. was that of a power seeking to avoid confrontation and fearful of its consequences, and therefore a power which could be subjected to a series of setbacks without high risks of forceful resistance."

The U. S. show of determination in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, convinced Soviet leaders we did mean business, Mr. Matthias says. He thinks that will stand the U. S. in good stead for a little while.

But he says there will be other times and other places in which Soviet leaders could again read a lack of willpower in U. S. actions. This could lead to trouble.

This study has the "general approval" of the CIA Board of National Estimates, "the no attempt has been made to reach complete agreement on every point."