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The International Situation Viscount Montgomery in the House of Lords

Hansard, June 26, 1963

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN: My Lords, the Motion put to us by the noble Lord has special reference to a test ban agreement. I suggest that we shall lose the real value of this Foreign Affairs debate if we confine it to too narrow a front—that is to say, merely to the problems connected with the test ban agreement, which of course we all want, and which I very much hope we shall get. That is why I was grateful, as the debate got under way, that it became widened, first by the noble Earl, Lord Avon, and then by the noble Earl the Foreign Secretary.

I should like to take a look at NATO and at its nuclear delivery set-up. Both of these need to be looked at through the right end of the telescope, and that is seldom done—hence the strait-jacket in which we find ourselves. I can claim to have a good working knowledge of what goes on inside NATO. I headed up the military side of the Western Union in 1948, the first organisation ever set up to create military strength in Western Europe against the threat from the East—before NATO was formed. In 1951 the Western Union was absorbed into NATO, under the first of the Supreme Allied Commanders, General Eisenhower, and I then served in NATO for seven more years. Those ten years in Continental Europe, working with the political and military politicians of NATO, were the most frustrating experience in the whole of my military life.

To-day, some fourteen years after the signing of the Treaty in Washington in March, 1949, what do we see? We see NATO in a state of disorder and confusion; its nuclear strategy and organisation is totally unco-ordinated; its views on the defence of the West are in a chaotic state; and we see a deep conflict of political purpose. What is the reason? The reason is intense nationalism, and, since 1948, a failure to subordinate national interests to the common good of all; that is to say, to the security of the Alliance. "Inter-dependence" has become a meaningless catchword. It is one thing for Ministers to sit around a table and make speeches which are written before they leave their home country—

THE EARL OF HOME: My Lords, I must object to that.

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN: Then I withdraw that remark—after they have reached the council chamber: it is a very different thing to get anything done. In NATO every decision has to be unanimous: this is supposed to be its great strength. In actual fact, therein lies its great weakness, because it is almost impossible to get fifteen nations to agree on policy. I must admit that I personally found this rather convenient. When I was Chief of the Imperial General Staff I served one Prime Minister, the noble Earl, Lord Attlee. It needed only his one decision to send for me and "tick me off"—which happened about once a

month. In NATO I served fifteen prime ministers, and I was quite safe. A unanimous decision was not possible, because I have never known fifteen prime ministers agree on anything.

NATO was formed to prevent Soviet expansion in Europe. It has done so. And in strengthening NATO, politically and militarily, lies the best hope for the Free World. It was never thought suitable, at the outset, to draw up a complete blueprint for the organisation; it was hoped that proper measures would be evolved, step by step, as the years went by. This has not happened, and when I left NATO in 1958, after ten years it was clear to me that it had become a first-class political racket. And I have never had any reason since then to change that opinion. The waste of money in NATO is terrific. With a simplified organisation, streamlined and effective, we could have a far better defence for about half the cost. NATO needs a thorough overhaul and a fundamental re-design. It needs simplicity of organisation and focal points of decision in that organisation. Most of your Lordships, I imagine, will have read the Treaty. Article 12 reads as follows: "After the Treaty has been in force for ten years, or at any time thereafter, the Parties shall, if one of them so requests consult together for the purpose of reviewing the Treaty. . . ." NATO was born of collective insecurity. There is still collective insecurity, and the time for a review, in accordance with Article 12 of the Treaty, is long overdue.

I do not want to be too hard on the existing NATO. It has done a tremendous job; it stopped the war and it has given us peace. But after a successful battle the wise commander reorganises and prepares for what lies ahead, which his experience tells him will present him with a totally different problem. So it is with NATO. My Lords, the true enemies of NATO are not its critics. The true enemies of NATO are its friends, who have consistently encouraged it to do what it was never intended to do and cannot possibly do effectively. As at present constituted, with a membership of over 100 nations armed with everything from bows and arrows to nuclear weapons, it can never be anything but a forum for discussion—unless it is reorganised. I would urge Her Majesty's Government to request that a review of the Treaty, in accordance with Article 12, takes place as a matter of extreme urgency. So much for NATO. I will now turn to the nuclear delivery capability of the West.

LORD SHACKLETON: My Lords, before the noble and gallant Viscount leaves the question of NATO, could he give some indication as to the way in which he thinks NATO might be reorganised as a result of this review?

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN: My Lords, I think that would mean that I should make a very long speech. I am greatly in favour of short speeches. I do not

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The Political Problem

By C. H. DOUGLAS (1946)

It is a curious commentary of our carefully directed educational system that what is perhaps the most quoted phrase of that useful tool of international Finance, Abraham Lincoln—"Government of the people, for the people, by the people"—is an exposure and condemnation of Lincoln himself. What is a people?

The United States in 1861 consisted broadly of two Anglo-Saxon settlements, the "Yankees" or new Englanders, in the North, the descendants of the bitter Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Settlement, and the Southern landowners, very much of the George Washington type, the Lees, Randolphs, the cadets of many Scottish Lowland families. Hereditarily, these were a "people" in any usual sense of the word. The rest of the population was an undigested mass of Dutch, German, and Mid-European elements, the disappearing "Red Indians," and the negro slaves.

It is only necessary to contemplate these unquestionable facts to be convinced that Lincoln's words are "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Two parts of the only recognisable whole led the two sides of the American Civil War: Lincoln's actual policy (*i.e.* the policy of which he was the visible executive) contradicted almost every one of his spoken statements—as for instance, his declaration that any country had a right to secede if it had the power—and a cold analysis of his most publicised apothegms indicates that they can bear any meaning which it may appear desirable to read into them.

If the orbit of the ideas for which Lincoln's verbiage was supposed to be the expression were bounded by the North American Continent, they might be left to work out their true meaning, as they are doing to-day, on the grave-yard of the noble redskin. But of course, they did not originate in America, and they are not confined to it. Lincoln's travesty of "Democracy" is the sheet anchor of the Supreme State; *vox populi, vox Dei* is the travesty and blasphemy of the Immanence of Good; and Tool Power Politics is the Incar-

nation as manifested in the Coming of the Prince of This World, the False Messiah.

Nothing is more remarkable in matters of politics than the sheer inability of even thoroughly honest and well-intentioned people to realise the consequences of their opinions.

There are as many definitions of "democracy" as there are men; yet, in fact, as has been admirably expressed in an Australian Broadcast, the key to democracy is to reduce a problem to the limits of interest and understanding of those concerned. That is to say, democracy is not so much a question of the mechanism of voting (although that is not of negligible importance); but rather a rigorous exclusion of matters for which the franchise is too wide: and at present the number of persons who think they understand everyone's business, but cannot manage their own, would suggest simple electoral issues.

It is not too much to say, I think, that anyone who cannot grasp this simple idea, or, having understood it, will not admit its validity, is unworthy of a vote and is a public danger if in possession of it. In the light which it throws upon the limitations of democratic theory, it is perfectly understandable that the condition of the world in general and Great Britain in particular has deteriorated in proportion to the extension of the ballot-box plot. No one would give a child of six a ten-pound note, turn him loose with a box of matches in a firework shop, and tell him to set off the pretty rockets. But that is exactly what has been done by giving the initiative to an uninstructed—worse, a mis-instructed—electorate, and allowing it to provide something claimed to be a mandate to interfere in the business of everyone having a "vested interest."

There are many matters which require attention; but interference with them will only deliver us from bad to worse until we can admit that power without understanding is the tool of the Devil. There is only one worse thing than the fool in politics and that is the technical expert who knows everything about his business except its legitimate object. We have often miraculously survived the former; but the latter shows signs of writing our epitaph.

The World Plot

It is a curious fact that the decreasing number of people who pour scorn on "World Plot" explanations of the present state of the world (not of one country only) do not appear to recognise the implications of their opinion. If they were right, the present discontents are inherent; we can do nothing more about them than we can do about the normal equipment of mankind with two legs and two arms. But if the "Plot" theory is correct then we can deal with it, great though the difficulties may be. Either all men are alike, as the Socialists would have us believe; or some are turned to the Light, and some love the Dark. That is the awful interpretation of the Judgment.

—A note by C. H. Douglas (1947)

"Occultism"

Most of us, because we have been conditioned to think that way, have a natural reluctance to accept "occultism" as a considerable force in world affairs. There could hardly be a greater error—it is the primary adversary of Christian civilisation. The forces of which it disposes are probably amoral; but the intention of those most evidently in possession of them is Satanic. The Jewish Cabala is one of its main roots.

—A note by C. H. Douglas (1948)

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY (continued from page 1)

want to speak for more than ten or twelve minutes. But if the noble Lord would like to have a talk with me outside, I should be delighted to give him my views. I could give him quite a "jugful".

LORD SHACKLETON: Would not the noble Viscount give the House even a small "jugful"?

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN: I think it had better come later on. Short speeches, if you do not mind. We have had some pretty long ones this afternoon.

With your Lordships' permission, a little back history will be necessary over this nuclear business. When nuclear weapons became available to the Armed Forces in NATO, I was serving as Deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. In that capacity I was involved in the deployment of the nuclear weapons and with the target systems. From the outset I pleaded for mobility; but, initially, mobility was very difficult because we had only liquid fuel.

When solid fuel became available, I gave it as my view that no nuclear launching sites for weapons should be deployed in Europe. The maximum mobility would be obtained in the air and on the sea. I added that, if we had no nuclear weapons on land in Europe, it would make it easier to reach some accommodation with Russia; and it was important to do that because of the rise of China. My advice was not taken. I have no complaint: I was not responsible; I was merely second-in-command. But let me make this point. Those who think that the land armies in Western Europe can use tactical nuclear weapons in battle without bringing on an all-out nuclear war involving megaton strategic weapons, are making a very great error.

SEVERAL NOBLE LORDS: Hear, hear!

EARL ALEXANDER OF HILLSBOROUGH: We have always said so from this side.

VISCOUNT MONTGOMERY OF ALAMEIN: Well I say so now from this side. I have said so before. I said so at the Royal Academy banquet. Such thinking (I am sure the noble Earl the Leader of the Opposition would agree) must be stamped on at once; and very firmly. There are to-day some who think that you can conduct ordinary military operations within the concept of nuclear war. You cannot do it. But to-day war games and exercises are carried out by certain NATO nations, which begin with the firing of many thousands of tactical nuclear weapons deployed to-day in Europe. My Lords, it is vital to take every step possible to prevent nuclear war, and within that context the proper way to regard the nuclear weapon is as a deterrent to prevent war—and to be used only as a last resort. And, of course, we must have it, as the noble Earl, Lord Avon, said.

In your Lordships' House on May 28 last, the noble Lord the First Lord of the Admiralty stated that "Her Majesty's Government have given a general welcome" (those were the words used), in principle, to the concept of a mixed-manned NATO force; that is to say, surface ships carrying Polaris missiles and manned by mixed crews. I gave it as my opinion that same afternoon, that the concept was all "utter and complete poppy-cock". The noble Lord, Lord Carrington, added that an American Admiral, Admiral Ricketts, accompanied by a small naval team, would be in London early in June to discuss the military aspects of that problem. I should like to be told what was said to Admiral Ricketts, and I think we have a right to know. I have some small experience of

High Command in war, in battle and in the conduct of war, and I can inform Her Majesty's Government that the general welcome given to the concept of a mixed-manned nuclear force of surface ships with Polaris weapons is the biggest military nonsense ever perpetrated by the Government. Instead of fighting the enemy outside the ships, the mixed crews are much more likely to fight each other inside the ships.

I remember that some years ago it was suggested there should be a NATO aeroplane; and a NATO maritime aircraft has, in fact, been developed by the French, and produced by a consortium of firms, the different parts of the whole project being parcelled out between various countries. But attempts to sub-divide development projects and production between NATO countries have proved a lamentable failure. There may be one or two exceptions—though if so, I do not know about them. This failure is not surprising. Commercial interests are involved. Unless firms are prepared to co-operate on terms agreeable to them, how can anything be started?

It is not possible to progress in that way, unless NATO was a supra-national authority which, through its sovereign power, could dictate how the resources of member nations were to be spent, taking into account the political and economic problems of the whole area over which it holds sway. But as I have already made clear, NATO is not a supra-national authority. You cannot have a NATO ship or a NATO aeroplane. You might just as well set up a breeding establishment and try to produce a NATO man. The only way for an alliance to fight effectively in battle, is to have national forces welded into a fighting machine. The concept to which the Government have given a "general welcome" is a political gimmick to try to improve the general *bonhomie* in NATO. I agree that the general *bonhomie* could do with some improving, but militarily it is absurd.

Now, my Lords, let us stretch our imagination and assume that the politicians are determined to perpetrate this absurdity—and it does not need a great deal of stretching, actually. We must then demand clear answers to three questions. The first question is: is this mixed-manned force to be part of the strategic deterrent? If so, it is not needed. The strategic deterrent is heavily over-subscribed already. The second question is: is it to take part in the tactical battle in NATO Europe? If so, how can a commander in NATO Europe operate megaton weapons which may well be 2,000 miles away? The third question is: how is it to be paid for? Will the Foreign Office pay? They seem to like the concept. The Defence budget is pruned, heavily pruned, to the last penny. If this force is to be created, something must be cut. What will be cut? If the Government were to bring the British Army out of Germany and bring it back to Britain, much money would be saved. So whatever way we look at the concept of mixed-manned NATO surface ships armed with Polaris weapons, we have to conclude that it is utter nonsense. Everybody knows it. But Ministers seem afraid to say so—presumably because it would offend the Americans, who invented the nonsense. I do not know what the first NATO ship will be called when it is launched, but I should call it the NATO Ship "Poppy-cock".

My Lords, in my profession the commander-in-chief in the field must ensure that what is strategically desirable is tactically possible with the forces at his disposal. That is one of the first rules of strategy, which I know very well. We are now at peace, and there must be a close marriage between political policy and military possibilities—that is to say,

Defence Departments must ensure that what is politically desirable makes sound, military common sense. In other words, is it militarily a "good egg"? Sometimes it is very difficult to decide and sometimes it does not really matter; but in this case it does matter, because the whole object of the NATO military machine is to be able to fight effectively in battle if attacked, and the only way to do that is to have national forces welded into a fighting machine. To get that welding is not too easy, even in war. How much more difficult is it in peace? I know very well that with mixed-manned forces it is impossible to fight effectively.

I read in the Press, I think yesterday—I know one cannot believe everything one reads in the Press, but I did read this—that the President of the United States and Dr. Adenauer have agreed that mixed-manned surface ships in NATO armed with Polaris missiles are quite "a good egg". I can tell them both, the President and Dr. Adenauer, in no uncertain voice, that it is "a completely rotten egg". I understand that the President is coming to England next week-end to discuss this very question, among others, with the Prime Minister. I would urge the Government to have courage and to tell the President that Great Britain will never agree to a military absurdity—one which will weaken the military effectiveness of the NATO military machine.

"Argentine Election Boycott"

(Times headline)

"Buenos Aires.—July 7. Supporters of the deposed President Peron today boycotted the Argentine general election, held to choose 476 members of a presidential electoral college and to fill many other posts. Associated parties and the trade unions also instructed their followers to cast blank papers. First reports indicated that early polling, in rainy weather almost everywhere, was orderly, with no incidents. —Reuter."

Comment: Doubtless for the wrong reasons; but that's the way to do it!

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Education Without Instruction

From Chapter IV

of

The House of Intellect

by

Jacques Barzun

(Mercury Books, London, 1962)

We must, if we really intend to change our schools, forget the language, and especially the slogans, of mass education. They betray the user as well as the listener. "Keeping our schools democratic," preventing them from "producing an elite," insisting on "giving all our children the same education" would not satisfy the very people who fight for these "principles," if "education" were omitted and the other words replaced by honestly descriptive ones: shall all children receive *instruction* in the same subjects through high school, whether they or their parents want the same or not? We say we need research scientists and engineers: does the choice of these careers require different instruction from hotel-keeping and shorthand and typewriting, or does it not? Does training a group of scientists at public expense in high schools and state universities create an elite likely to lord it over hotel managers and stenographers? Or more generally, does social equality depend on the possession of identical knowledge? The question of different training clearly applies as well to scholars in the humanities and the social sciences (who, it seems, are also wanted men) and to lawyers, doctors, accountants, and other professionals.

As for keeping the school "democratic" in the sense of ignoring differences of ability and "giving" a college career to all who ask for it, this is the scheme which has just broken down and brought many people to the realisation that it is wasteful, dangerous, and unjust. Ability and achievement are too important to the country to be any longer trifled with, as has been done by maintaining that failure is something a child must invariably be shielded from, lest he take a dislike to learning. True, every reproof must be accompanied by encouragement, and error should not be represented to youth as irrevocable. But none of this means that to fail is one way of succeeding. The analogy of athletics must be pressed until all recognize that in the exercise of Intellect those who lack muscles, co-ordination, and will-power can claim no place at the training table, let alone on the playing field . . .

When, therefore, critics from the universities attack our public schools (U.S.A.) for anti-intellectualism, on the assumption that it would take only a high resolve and a changed curriculum to make them seminaries of Intellect, the attack falls harmlessly against the solid barrier of facts: we cannot make intellectuals out of two million pupils—too many are incapable of the effort even a moderately bookish education requires; too many have the good sense to know that they want instead some vocational training that will be immediately marketable. . . .

THE BRIEF FOR THE PROSECUTION

by

C. H. DOUGLAS

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