

"MORALS AND STRATEGY"

New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir: To my surprise, I find that I have been employed as a stalking-horse in Bernard Brodie's otherwise common-sense article "Morals and Strategy" (*worldview*, September 1964). He makes me stand for the "class" of *faineant* intellectuals who fastidiously disdain the mathematical and "game-theory" approaches to national planning while enjoying the national security shored up by same. This is unfair. There is no distaste either in my writings about or my feelings for the RAND Corporation or Dr. Brodie. Nor do I disdain professional soldiers or the Commander-in-Chief. Instead, I hope they are supplied with the most expert possible advisers in every department. But I tried to make an entirely different point.

What I tried to say was that history shows innumerable gifted men who have made complex (and often just) analyses of society, have extrapolated in time forwards and backwards with great accuracy, and then have attempted to communicate their insights to the kings and viziers who steer the real-life ships of state. Failure, frustration, and muddle are their invariable lot. One thinks of Plato, Campanella, Machiavelli, and a hundred others. One thinks of Strafford—formidable man of affairs in himself, with his grand scheme for emancipating the king from the harassments of Parliament—running aground on the incomprehension and conservatism of the very personage he ~~move~~ move to serve. Systematic, scientific thought demands not only intellectuality but, far more important, a special kind of intellectual

coherence which is far to seek in the realm of politics.

Now we all know that RAND and Dr. Brodie and Mr. Kahn do fascinating work on the incredibly vexed problems posed by the technologies of modern war. But to what extent can their methods pervade the mental processes of President Johnson, President de Gaulle, Mr. Suslov, Mr. Chou En-Lai, Dr. Duvalier¹ of Haiti, or the editor of *The New York Times*? How often can Dr. Brodie's counsel be usefully weighed, let alone followed, when inevitably it will be so rarely understood? This question is what I was implying in my little note.

PETER V. RITNER

The Author Replies:

Santa Monica, California

Dear Sir: I am surprised at Mr. Ritner's protest. After all, I taxed him with nothing more than "distaste" for the work of a certain group of men associated with RAND, of whom I happen to be one. To have distaste for that kind of work is not a sin, nor even blameworthy. As for the accuracy of my observation concerning the feelings he previously expressed, it seems to me the paragraph-long quotation from Mr. Ritner in my article speaks for itself.

BERNARD BRODIE

[Editors note: *Through a typographical error in Mr. Brodie's article, the number of deaths resulting from the fire raids on Tokyo was given as 1,000,000. The correct figure, of course, is 100,000.*]

"The self-deceptions of national pride continually need to be deflated and the temptations of nations to abuse power need to be exposed. In an open society in which freedom to criticize is safeguarded and in which institutions that are independent of the state are encouraged to be themselves, this type of national self-criticism should be expected. One of the effects of the separation of Church and State should be the preservation of the Church's freedom to criticize the state from its own vantage point as the interpreter of the transcendent will of God and as itself a universal community that includes people on the other side of every international conflict."

from

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by John C. Bennett

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