
FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

*Bombs at the
Threshold*

"Enhanced-Radiation Warfare" by Jorma K. Meittinen, in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, (Sept. 1977), 1020 E. 58th St., Chicago, Ill. 60637.

Congress is currently debating development of a new, more sophisticated weapon, the enhanced-radiation, or "neutron," bomb. The principal difference between this nuclear weapon and others is its capacity to deal a lethal blow to enemy troops while greatly limiting damage to buildings and roads in the area of the blast.

The mechanics of the weapon are straightforward, writes Meittinen, professor of radiochemistry at the University of Helsinki. A nuclear explosion sets off two distinct reactions, fission and fusion. Traditional atomic weapons achieve a predominantly fission effect through blast and release of thermal radiation, which ignites and demolishes ships, tanks, buildings and other physical structures. Humans are killed either directly through intense heat or indirectly by the impact of hurtling objects or collapsing buildings.

Fusion or neutron bombs, on the other hand, release most of their energy in the form of neutron and gamma radiation. A one kiloton explosion, for example, would incapacitate and eventually kill all human life within a half-mile radius; structural damage, however, would be limited to a fraction of this area.

Pentagon proponents of the neutron bomb stress its usefulness against battlefield targets and its operational versatility, especially in Europe. It would provide NATO forces with another option against Soviet attack where nuclear counterblows may have seemed undesirable in the past. Meittinen argues however, that this very versatility makes the neutron bomb's early use more likely, thereby lowering the "nuclear threshold."

Military concerns aside, he notes the slow, agonizing death that would be the fate of many victims of radiation poisoning and warns of the "incalculable consequences" of genetic damage to survivors of a neutron blast.

Redrawing the Map

"The Black Man's Burden" by Kenneth L. Adelman, in *Foreign Policy* (Fall 1977), 155 Allen Blvd., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735.

The Carter administration's new Africa policy has been "justified for the wrong reasons and implemented amateurishly," contends Adelman, a former Pentagon official. Moral pronouncements and demands that South Africa grant its black majority full political rights on a "one man, one vote" basis are naive.

Black majority rule in South Africa cannot automatically be equated

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

with civil and political liberties, argues Adelman. Some 90 percent of the African countries have one-party governments or military dictatorships. Few have independent judiciaries or protect free speech. However, the Carter administration is apparently not prepared to make human rights the criterion for a consistent policy toward both black and white Africa. And rather than directly confront Soviet-sponsored arms build-ups, the United States has relied on Britain and France to cope with "the nasty business" of African national security (as in 1977, when France airlifted Moroccan troops to help defend Zaire).

The White House now lacks any coherent long-range plan for South Africa. But a step in the right direction, Adelman contends, would be to recognize that, given Pretoria's substantial military power, economic base, and resolve, the South African story will not end with whites being pushed into the sea. One solution may be wholesale readjustment of South Africa's borders, creating one "smaller white-dominated state" and a few "truly independent black ones," as opposed to South Africa's current "homelands" policy, which assigns 6 million blacks to poverty-ridden tribal areas, such as Transkei, where many of them have never been.

This approach would be "unappealing" to many Americans, accustomed to a multi-racial, multi-ethnic state. But it is nevertheless both feasible and just. South Africa has shown a willingness to cede territory if not power; but it is as determined to maintain a white-ruled state in a hostile environment "as Israel is to preserve its Jewish-ruled one." And for all their militant rhetoric, neighboring black-ruled nations are inclined to maintain economic ties with Pretoria; South Africa runs Mozambique's ports and rail system, while providing 80 percent of its foreign exchange, and Zaire sends three quarters of its copper out through South African ports.

The Inevitability of Surprise

"The Yom Kippur War and the Inevitability of Surprise" by Michael I. Handel, in *International Studies Quarterly* (Sept. 1977), 275 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90212.

The first paradox of surprise military attacks is that aggressor "signals" can never be trusted by the defense. While there may be no lack of "noise" from the enemy's camp, all of it is distorted. As a result, writes Handel, a foreign affairs analyst at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, there may be guidelines for deciphering enemy intentions and capabilities, but there is no foolproof way of preventing—or apprehending in advance—a surprise attack. This the Israelis learned to their cost in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

For the Israelis, the years after the 1967 Six Day War seemed prosperous and free of threats, leading them to assume that what was good for Israel must also be good for the Arabs. According to Western military logic, no nation will resort to war unless its chances of victory are