

5/21/86

Dear Albert + Richard

Thank you for "Beyond Snipe Attack..."

Although I remain MADder than yourselves, I do find your arguments persuasive. At the very least, I agree that to deter a controlled nuclear attack we need credible preparations to fight back at less than suicidally provocative levels. And I agree that pure irrationality cannot be deterred.

I also suggest your operational & ³ recommendations.

(P.S. I have been a steady ARPANET user for over ~~20~~¹⁰ years.)

- ① On controlled attack and response: how do you reconcile your expectations that ^{their} our leaders will make such cool, correctly calculated judgments with the reported failure of judgment that you so often criticize?
- ② Have you worked out a detailed scenario or wargame: ^{e.g.} the Soviets destroy our coast-based expeditionary force with a limited attack. What does the President then do? What do they do.... Isn't ^{it} the risk (if not the certainty) of escalation to MAD that deters the first step?

I agree we still need some capability of responding to salami-slicing. My fear is that it may be exercised more frivolously, in "demonstrations" (as I have heard Ken Adelman say), and so on.

I offer no good answers. Perhaps you have some clarity to share with me via the scenarios I asked for. I have some glimmers that there is room to work out threat-bargaining techniques for some extraneous, e.g. that the threat of using nuclear attack ~~to~~ for a desperate but limited objective like extricating a U.S. ~~division~~ ^{division} from a Khe Sanh-like predicament in the Gulf might lead to a negotiated settlement of a conventional conflict. These kinds of confrontations are not likely to be resolved by unilateral victory. So in the right setting, the risk of escalation to MAD, and a capability for flexible response, may organize the environment to save either as the level of violence and ^{coercive} confrontations that both sides will hazard. ⁽²⁾ E³I - survivability, then becomes terribly important to negotiate such settlements. In the interval of

limited objectives this is also incentive to not decapitate.

Should we think of measures to prevent accidental or inadvertent decapitation?

J

Do you make explicit that there is little need for precise C^3 survivability after BOOB?

(# including rhetorical)

② Much/most of that negotiation is within our own side, e.g. to enforce an armistice. Hence the C^3 imperative: