

# THE GOLD WAR AND WORLD POVERTY

THE great majority of the people of the world will continue to live in misery for as long as the Cold War continues. The arms race which accompanies the conflict between East and West not only imposes on mankind the appalling prospect of annihilation, but condemns most men to starvation and disease.

The two issues which I consider to be the most urgent before mankind are ending the arms race and beginning world planning for development through world government.

*These issues are closely connected. Unless the conflict between East and West ends and the arms race is eliminated, all efforts towards development will remain token and insufficient.*

The explosion of population and the depletion of resources which have taken place create greater problems of disease and hunger with each year that passes.

The conclusion which I draw from these contentions is that non-alignment is an essential policy for the survival of mankind and the social advance of the greater part of humanity.

Even when countries which are aligned to one of the two blocs promote the economic and social welfare of their populations, they contribute indirectly to the causes of misery and of danger to life because they sustain the Cold War conflict.

*As long as there are two contending blocs wasting the industrial potential of our planet in a conflict which benefits no one, peace and well-being will be illusory goals.*

## Its Effect

I shall examine the human and material cost of the arms race and consider its effect on underdeveloped countries.

At present, the world expenditure on arms is 140,000 million dollars annually. This means an expenditure of 400 million dollars daily and 16 million dollars each hour.

These figures, however, do not include a variety of hidden costs, the consequences of which are as grave as the acknowledged expenditure.



by  
**BERTRAND  
RUSSELL**

Bertrand Russell writes another brilliant article for **AFRICA AND THE WORLD**. It is the most challenging exposure ever published of the arms race and the military establishment. Earl Russell reveals that:

- Current world expenditure on armaments is 140 thousand million dollars a year, more than the total annual income of the whole of the developing countries.

- Nearly 50 per cent. of the entire economic activity in the United States is now related to war.

- More than eight million Americans depend for their jobs on the military establishment.

- The United States Defence Department is the world's biggest economic organisation.

- The nuclear stockpile is enough to destroy the world many times over.

**This is the insane situation with which mankind, most of which does not even get enough to eat, must now contend . . .**

The misallocation of resources, the exhaustion of energy supplies, the utilisation of essential labour, material and plant, all of which are unavailable for constructive use because of arms production—create evils in excess of the vast sums squandered.

For each million dollars wasted, the problems which are unattended multiply and make more costly and more difficult their future solution.

**THE CURRENT ARMS EXPENDITURE EXCEEDS THE ENTIRE NATIONAL INCOME OF ALL UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES. IT EXCEEDS THE WORLD'S ANNUAL EXPORTS OF ALL COMMODITIES. IT EXCEEDS THE NATIONAL INCOME OF AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA. OVER 60 MILLION PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN ARMS INDUSTRIES.**

When one examines the origins of this terrible arms outlay, it becomes clear that the most developed countries are not only those which can most afford to waste resources, but are the

countries which do so in disproportionate ways.

*Seven countries account for 85 per cent. of all arms expenditure: Canada, China, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and the USSR.*

All the underdeveloped countries together—the vast majority of mankind—account for one-tenth of Western arms expenditure.

The United States budget of 50,000 million dollars for arms represents 35 per cent. of the world total.

## Squandermania

Military expenditure, moreover, tends to use the particular kinds of resources most valuable for productive investment. The fuel, light and heat sources squandered could transform the non-industrial countries.

It will illustrate the argument if I give some comparative costs.

One British aircraft carrier costs £65 million. £40 million would make



drinking water available to everyone in Egypt. The same amount would provide 900 rural health clinics.

One Atlas missile costs 30 million dollars. This amount represents the total investment for nitrogen fertiliser plant with capacity of 50,000 to 70,000 tons per annum.

It should be remembered that the inordinate amounts expended on arms would, if available for investment, be worth many factors more.

If the £1,400 million spent by Britain on arms were to be invested, it would be worth at least ten times that amount.

Translating these comparative costs into British terms, one Polaris missile equals four universities, one V-bomber equals seven secondary schools, one TSR2 equals five modern hospitals and one missile destroyer equals 100,000 tractors.

Mr. Wyndham Smith said recently at a Fabian conference: "*We are confronted with the paradox of the less developed countries being encouraged and aided financially to develop industries, the products of which are confronted with severe and discriminatory measures*".

### What "Aid" Means

This statement illustrates the true nature of the relationship between the industrial countries and the non-industrial ones.

Not only do the industrial countries waste the world's resources on arms, but the so-called financial aid which is given is designed to perpetuate the flight of resources and investment capital from the dependent countries.

*The aid given emphasises such industries as further bind the dependent country to the industrial one.*

Aid to Latin America invariably creates a greater amount of poverty than would be the case without such aid. This is so, paradoxically, because the production thereby stimulated facilitates the greater removal of capital profits from the country concerned.

The appearance of greater productivity is illusory because the beneficiaries are not those to whom "aid" is given.

Two hundred million dollars in foreign credits were given to Latin America by the United States. Over 200 million dollars were deposited in Swiss banks during the same period by the corrupt ruling elites which dominate those unhappy countries.

The wickedness of Western industrial behaviour is best illustrated by the way in which food surpluses are handled in the United States.

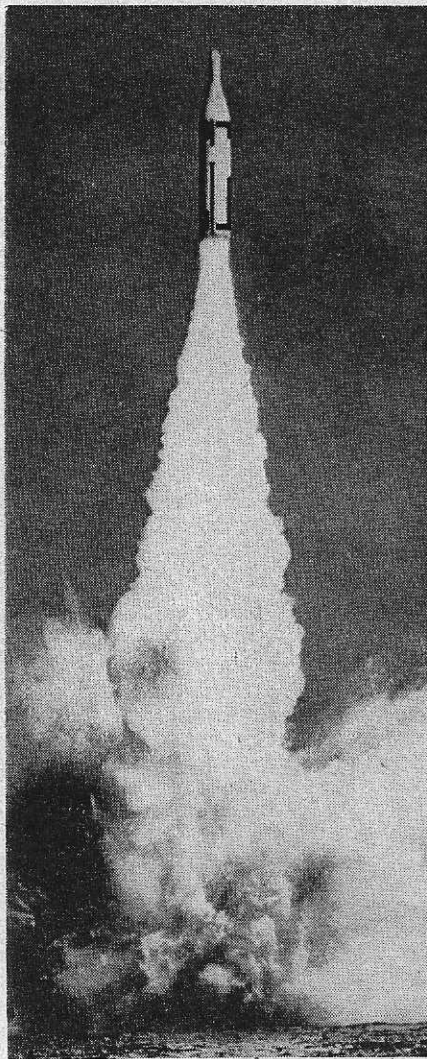
In the past fourteen years the United States spent 4,000 million dollars to purchase farm surpluses. These surpluses of wheat, oats, barley, maize, butter and cheese are stored and poisoned to retain the price level in Western countries.

*Blue dye is poured into great mountains of butter and cheese to render them unusable.*

By 1960, 125 million tons of bread grain had been so stored in the United States—enough to feed every Indian for a year. Each year there are 14 million more to be fed in India.

### Batten on Poor

The rich countries batten on the poor. Dag Hammarskjold pointed out that a drop of five per cent. in the world price of the staple exports of any country would wipe out all investments of the World Bank, of the United Nations and all bilateral and other investment.



A Polaris missile is launched from a submarine beneath the surface of the sea. The cost of just one Polaris missile would pay for four universities. This is what is thrown away every time a missile is launched for "practice"!

Bearing this in mind, it is worth noting that over recent years prices have operated against poor countries not at five per cent. but at forty per cent.

*The great industrial production of the Western world is consciously employed not only to perpetuate the hunger which exists in the world, but to increase it for purposes of profit.*

The United Arab Republic is making a valiant effort to transform the social conditions of its people. 16 out of 26 million Egyptians suffer from bilharziasis.

This debilitating disease, affecting two-thirds of the population of the United Arab Republic, costs the UAR one-third of its national income annually: 1,000 million dollars.

In order to remedy this dread disease, it would be necessary to construct latrines for the 4,200 villages of Egypt. Latrines, however, will themselves provide a health menace because the Nile Delta water table is too near the surface of the soil.

Only when the Aswan Dam traps the Nile, as Erskine Childers pointed out, thereby lowering the water table, will a complete latrine programme be possible.

The difficulty lies in the fact that the High Dam itself will create a new threat of bilharziasis by bringing the parasites of Upper Egypt through the standing channels, which will breed them.

*Vast sums will be needed to combat the bilharziasis snail and the disease itself.*

### Deadliest Enemies

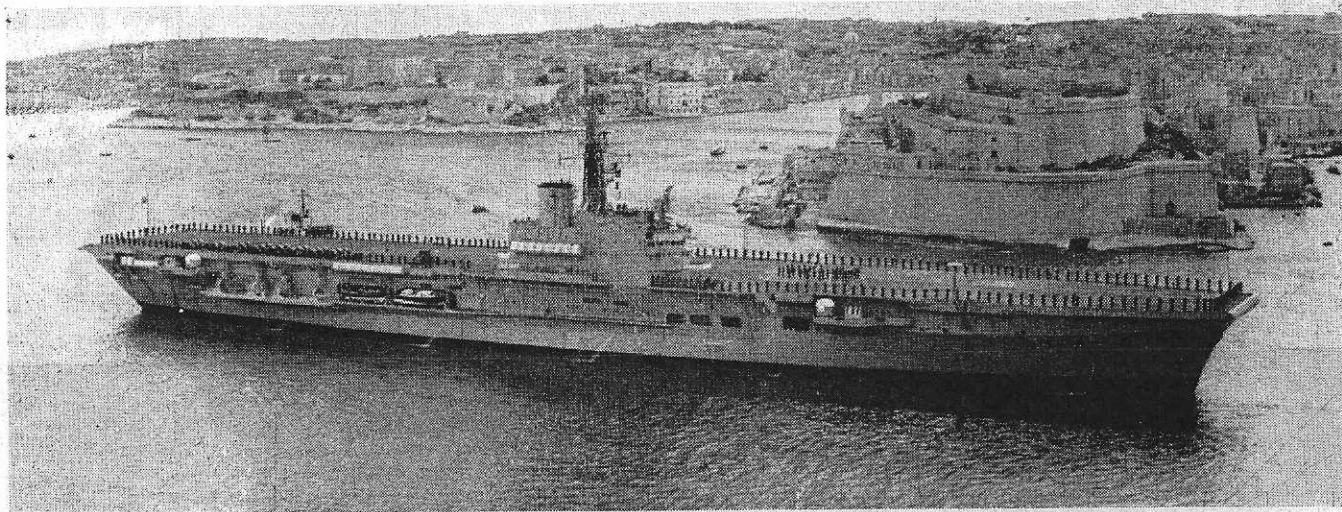
It should be clear that the arms race and the Cold War are the deadliest enemies of mankind.

In South Africa, 10,000 children die annually from gastro-enteritis. Smallpox, which plagues Cambodia, could be eliminated at a cost of 500,000 dollars. Untold millions suffer from yaws, which can be cured by a shot of penicillin costing sevenpence. Five hundred million people have trachoma. Sixty per cent. of African children suffer from protein deficiency diseases such as kwashiokor, beri-beri or pellagra.

*When the United States hoarded its farm surpluses, it not only deprived starving people of food but forced all underdeveloped countries to buy food at high cost.*

During the 1950's the per capita income of people in 100 underdeveloped countries rose ten dollars. The population rose in greater excess, thus further impoverishing the peoples of the world.





An aircraft carrier. Average cost: £65 million. What could that money buy in health clinics or schools or tractors? £40 million would make drinking water available to everyone in the United Arab Republic. It would provide 900 rural health centres . . .

The waste cannot be measured only in terms of want. When Al-Masudi rode from Morocco to Peking in the tenth century, the only fertile country he encountered was in the valley of the Nile.

*These great deserts could provide enough food to feed people in the world many times over. The only obstacle to this taking place is the arms race and the Cold War.*

To further illustrate problems facing non-industrial countries, I should mention that water for drinking, irrigation and power is desperately needed by developing countries.

Algeria requires a 500-mile pipeline to bring water to her people. The cost of this is £25 million, a fraction of the money spent on one experimental missile.

These figures can be taken as typical of other countries in similar circumstances.

### Arms Industry

It would be well to examine the role of the arms industry in countries such as the United States. Each world crisis brings a boom to the stock market. The Berlin crisis brought stock market profits to all time highs.

I should like to investigate the reasons.

*Property owned by the United States Defence Department was valued almost ten years ago at 160 billion dollars. This makes the US Defence Department the world's largest organisation.*

The Pentagon owns millions of acres of land, including 32 million acres in the United States and nearly 3 million acres in foreign countries.

The Pentagon building is so large that the Capitol, which seats the

United States Government, could be swallowed in any one of the five main segments of the Pentagon.

The 1962 budget involved 53 billion dollars for arms, exclusive of the military space programme.

Thus, by 1962, 63 cents out of every dollar were spent on appropriations for arms and space expenditure.

A further six cents was spent on veteran services and 80 per cent. of interest payments were for military debts.

### All Mankind

Seventy-seven cents out of every 100 are spent on past wars, the Cold War and preparations for future war.

The billions of dollars thus funnelled into the pockets of the military in the United States provide the Pentagon with economic power affecting every aspect of American life and, therefore, of the lives of mankind.

*Military assets in the United States are three times as great as the combined assets of United States Steel, American Telephone and Telegraph, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, General Motors and Standard Oil of New Jersey.*

The employees of the Defence Department are triple the number of all those of these great corporations.

This immense world concentration of power and wealth is closely connected to large industry in the United States.

The billions of dollars in contracts are awarded by the Pentagon and fulfilled by large industry.

In 1960, 21 billion dollars were spent for the procurement of military goods. Ten corporations received seven-and-a-half billion dollars, three corporations received one billion dollars each and two others 900 million

dollars.

*This means that these immensely powerful corporations must cultivate military personnel in the United States.*

The result is that 1,400 retired officers above the rank of Major are employed by the top corporations which divide the 21 billion dollars.

This list includes 261 generals or officers of flag rank.

The company with the largest contracts, General Dynamics, has on its payroll 187 retired officers, 27 generals and admirals and a former Secretary of the Army.

*IT IS CLEAR THAT AMERICAN POLICY AND THE ARMS RACE SERVE A VAST POWER COMPLEX INTERCONNECTED AND INTERESTED IN THE PERPETUATION OF THE ARMS RACE FOR ITS OWN SAKE.*

This concentration of power spreads throughout the economy of the United States.

Sub-contracts awarded by war contractors involve every city of any size. The jobs at stake involve millions of people. Nearly four million people work for the Defence Department alone.

Their payroll is 12 billion dollars, or twice that of the automobile industry of the United States.

A further four million people are employed directly in arms industries.

### Over 8 Million

*This means that over eight million Americans depend for their jobs on the military establishment.*

In certain areas of the United States the percentage is far higher. Missile production accounts for 82 per cent. of all manufacturing jobs in San Diego, California, 72 per cent. in Wichita, Kansas, and 53 per cent. in

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Seattle, Washington.

Defence contracts alone account for 30 per cent. of all manufacturing employment in Kansas, Washington, New Mexico, California and Connecticut. Arms industries spend five billion dollars annually in California alone. In Los Angeles, over half the jobs depend directly or indirectly on arms expenditure.

**IN THE UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE, NEARLY 50 PER CENT. OF ALL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY HINGES UPON MILITARY SPENDING.**

The economic investment in the arms race, in the Cold War, in the perpetuation of exploitation and in retaining the relationship which now exists between impoverished countries and wealthy ones is overwhelming.

Every food store, every petrol station, requires the perpetuation of war production. The meaning of this is that the United States cannot afford peace unless it is prepared for the most profound transformation of its society.

### What Could Happen

Let me repeat what I wrote last month in *Africa and the World*, about the danger to human life on the planet which follows from the pursuance of these policies.

*The great powers had stockpiled by 1963 the equivalent in TNT of 320 thousand million tons of explosives. To exhaust this nuclear stockpile would involve the use of all the*

*explosive power of the entire second world war every day for 146 years.*

This nuclear stockpile doubles each year.

The United States has also stockpiled 130,000 aerosol nerve gas bombs. There are the means to kill all life in an area of 455 million square miles, or, in other words, eight times the land surface of the earth and 151 times that of the United States.

### Death Margin

The missiles which will carry these weapons are scattered over the planet and depend on warning margins as short as 30 seconds. These missile systems are connected to giant computers which take their information from radar, which is not capable of distinguishing all natural phenomena from missiles.

It is no exaggeration to say that every moment of each day we risk the imminent destruction of life on our planet.

*Fifty accidents with nuclear armed missiles or aircraft took place between 1945 and 1960.*

In the same period there were many false radar reports. In 1960 radar in Greenland picked up the rising of the moon and interpreted it as a Soviet missile attack.

The decision was given to obliterate the Soviet Union, but was not taken at the last moment because a Canadian commander had second thoughts. His second thoughts were assisted by a freak accident.

An underwater cable had been cut by an iceberg, causing delay!

*A mad miscalculation, an impulse, a trivial mechanical mishap, can end life and cause agonising death to hundreds upon hundreds of millions of people.*

I maintain that there are no criminals worse than those who, over many years, have based their policy and their practice upon this prospect.

I further maintain that, apart from the base and immoral danger these potential mass murderers have presented to mankind, the result of their mental illness has been life expectancy averaging 25 years, the death through hunger of tens of millions of people and suffering which cannot easily be calculated.

### Africa Must Act!

I have tried to develop a picture of the world which would account for the arms race, the Cold War and the poverty which afflicts the great majority of the people of the world.

It is not enough, however, to indicate in this sketchy way the problems which confront us. It would be a useless exercise, unless we were prepared to draw a lesson and to act.

**PEACE AND SOCIAL ADVANCE CAN ONLY COME ABOUT IF THE LEADERSHIP OF COUNTRIES NOT PARTY TO THE COLD WAR REFUSE TO LEND THEMSELVES TO IT AND USE EVERY MEANS AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO END IT.**

The people of Africa are not party to the Cold War. It is not their conflict, although they suffer the consequences. There is a world organisation through which non-aligned countries can use their political ability to oppose the policies of the Great Powers.

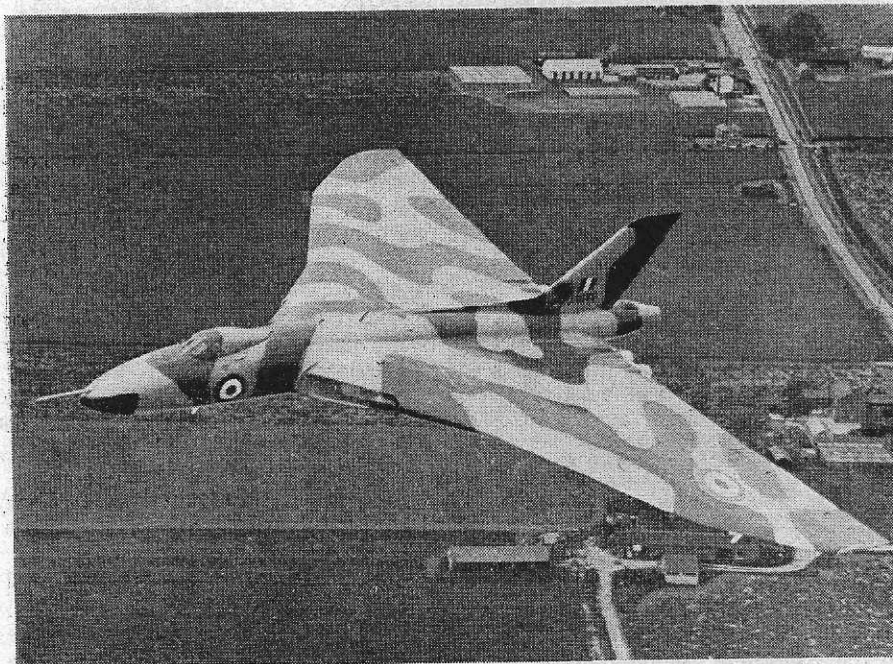
I do not underestimate the difficulties in such a course. We have seen what France imposed on Algeria for seeking its independence.

We have witnessed the state of siege imposed on Cuba by the United States because Cuba has desired to create conditions for its people which are different to those imposed on other Latin American nations.

### Must Be Opposed

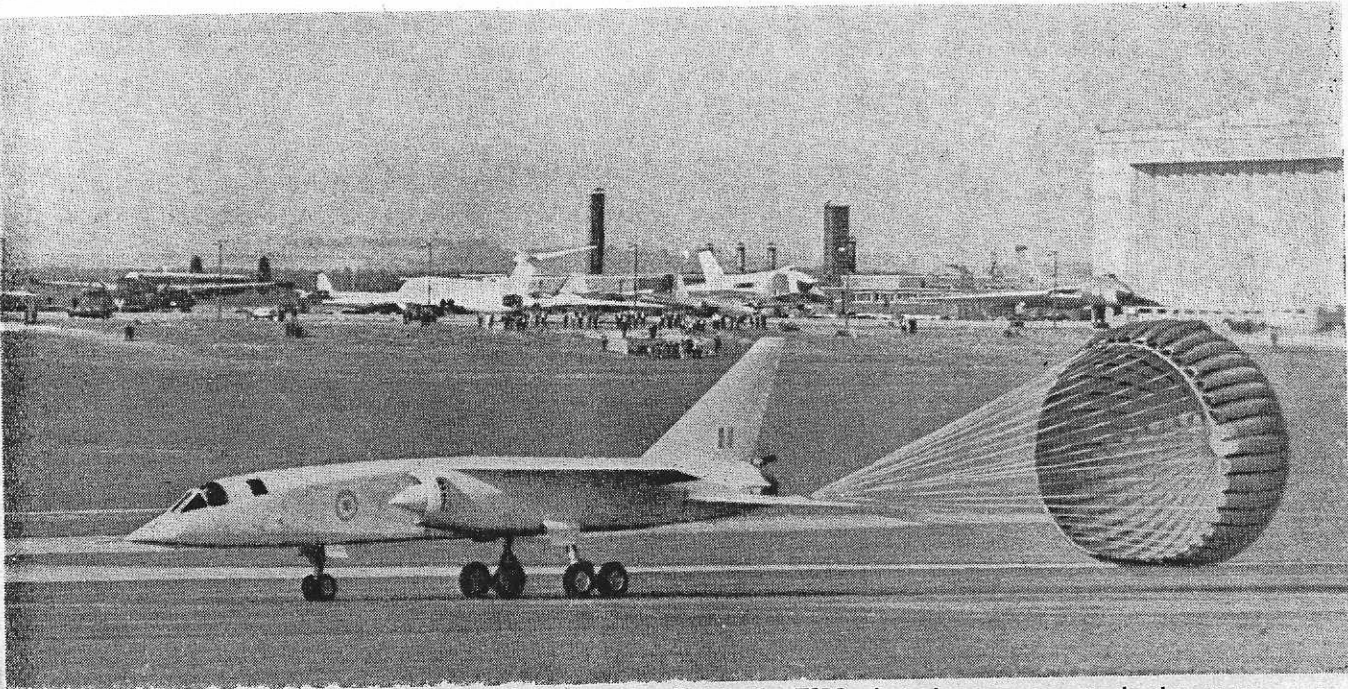
*Nonetheless, policies of the arms race and the Cold War must be resolutely opposed without resort to the very source of our dilemma, namely, the arms race itself.*

If this is to happen, I believe that developing countries cannot afford to



This is a Hawker Siddeley VULCAN B Mk. 2. One V-bomber costs the equivalent of seven secondary schools!





And here is Britain's latest warplane after its maiden flight—the TSR2. It took seven years to develop at an estimated cost of £400 million. Some experts say it became obsolete before it became airborne! But it will go on being built. Each plane which comes off the production line will cost the equivalent of five modern hospitals!

stifle free, critical, open and effective debate within their countries about the road to peace and development. The difficulties imposed, by those who pursue the Cold War, on neutral and non-aligned nations will not be overcome by silencing criticisms and preventing mistakes from being honestly explored.

### Pressures

The most determined and dedicated leadership will be subjected to pressures from the quarters I have sought to describe in this article, which makes it all the more important that within the national life of a developing country the corrective of criticism

should always be possible.

We know from experience that when people are under pressure and are experiencing hardship and difficulty in the course of noble aims, they are inclined to discount views held by those who may disagree with them but who share their aims.

This is dangerous for the well-being of developing countries and it weakens the struggle against war and exploitation which is essential to man's survival and his well-being.

*The cause of peace will be enhanced by vigorous non-alignment on the part of the developing countries. We in the West who are working for the same aims are seeking to transform Western public opinion in as short a time as possible. If we are to succeed, we shall*

*require the comradely support of all the developing countries.*

### Common Struggle

It is my hope that the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation will be able to play an important role in creating a public opinion in the Western world which will demand an end to the power of the Pentagon and an end to the policies I have described in this article.

The people and leadership of the independent African states are looked to by us in the West for common struggle and the closest co-operation and friendship in pursuit of a better world.

## Here is another brief reminder . . .

- One aircraft carrier equals more than 1,000 rural health centres . . .
  - One Atlas missile equals plant to produce 50,000 to 70,000 tons annually of nitrogen fertiliser . . .
  - One Polaris missile equals four universities . . .
  - One V-bomber equals seven secondary schools . . .
  - One TSR2 equals five modern hospitals . . .
  - One missile destroyer equals 100,000 tractors . . .
- . . . AND THE TOTAL ARMS RACE BILL IS 140,000 MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR!**

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