Cold War Neurosis
In U.S. Criticized

By PHIL BARBER

The U.S. is immersed in a cold war mentality that, as much as any other factor, threatens to throw us into a Third World War. The nation and its leaders assume the inevitability of such a war, and our foreign policy, (or lack thereof) military strategy, and budget are designed accordingly. Why? Is this the wisest policy? What are the alternatives?

Because of foreign commitments, some necessary measures for Western defense, others highly questionable, "bilateral defense" given to the President in the 1952 fit of crusading enthusiasm and national righteousness, the U.S. may be obliged to go to war for any one of a number of trivial causes. Ike's brilliant unleashing of the Formosa paper tiger is the most obvious present danger. "Kuomun" and Matsu and actually pieces of the Chinese mainland and their possession by discredited and dishierated Nationalist China are pinpricks in the side of the growing, antagonistic, but sovereign Red Chinese giant. The oftmentioned comparison is to the hypothetical possession of Staten Island by the Russians.

No Defense Purpose

While Formosa has geographical qualms as a historical detachment from the mainland, Quemoy and Matsu do not. They serve no defense purpose whatsoever and are admittedly held only as stepping stones for a threatened but utterly preposterous Nationalist invasion and "liberation" of a China that never profitted from a corrupt Chiang Kai-Shek regime. More importantly, Nationalist possession of the islands furnishes a rallying cry for a new China bitterly resentful of foreign domination in the past.

But we are committed, and neither side can back down without losing face. Everyone knows it is a bad situation in which we can only be embarrassed, but why need the nation be thrown into war over such useless islands that can so easily be blockaded and strangled by conventional weapons alone? And Formosa is but an example. We could just as easily go to war anywhere over the globe.

"Blip" Or "Bogy"

Consider our strategy of massive retaliation. A single freak blip or bogy on the DEW line radar could send out bombs to Russia. The contemplation of full-scale warfare becomes even grimmer with the advent of ICBM's and missile-equipped subs, nuclear or otherwise. If all enemy bombers admittedly could not be prevented by our defenses, are we so confident and blase about the development of anti-missile missiles? Are not our own bombers soon to be obsolete and useless?

Is it necessary to point out that we have, an yet, no effective civil defense program, metropolitan bomb shelters, or, nationally-published information about bacteriological or gas warfare? Maybe the Russians are as scared as we, but it is scant consolation, and nobody knows what the Chinese might do.

Moral Campaign Proposed

We can no longer afford glibly to assume either that war is necessary or that an international nuclear arms race is the only effective deterrent to global warfare. Scientists meeting in Geneva believe that effective detection of all atomic tests is possible, and the recent suspension of nuclear testing is somewhat encouraging. Disarmament alone affords hope, and perhaps we could thereafter launch a moral campaign that would have some pretense to be moral, rather than expedient or desperate.

The Eisenhower father-figure is fading, as even a fool such as Faukus can see. The fact that some opposition to the Administration stand on Formosa has developed shows that the cold war mentality may be similarly weakening in America as well as in Europe. The answer lies not in prayer, withdrawal, and meditation, or mad partying while the rest of the world prepares for eventual war; but in rational de-liberation, willingness to assume sincerity for peace on the part of the Soviets, and absolute determination to make a plan of disarmament, mutual inspection, and ceasing of the arms race and its accompanying chauvinism work.

Only then can we pose as a peace-loving and possibly even a Christian nation. But let us stop damning the heathens and doing nothing else but being sentimental about our own moral superiority. We should assume the risk of being branded Pelagian only because we believe something can and must be done.