After five lectures, I ask myself, and you may be asking yourself: What now? Where do we go from here? There are those who would say, like the Irish farmer in the story who was asked the way to Dublin by a tourist lost in the bog: ‘Well, if I were ever going to Dublin, I’d never start from here!’ But here we are and today is always our starting-point.

Those who are possessed with a feeling of approaching doom will feel badly let down if we don’t move far more quickly than we have to this goal of peace in a nuclear world. When progress is slow, the idealists are always in danger of becoming cynics, while realists may grow in sober confidence and hope for the longer future. C. S. Lewis once wrote: ‘I am an optimist, because I believe in the fall of man.’ I suppose it all depends on whether we think of the state of nature as Shangri-La or as nasty and brutish. If we believe that the world is made up of powerful irrational forces, that anarchy and dissolution are always closer than we think, then we have some reason for optimism, not only because we are still here, but because we are moving forward, however slowly. Meanwhile the threat of a war of universal destruction remains, and produces a deep fear of the future. In technological and scientific advance we have scaled the heights, but in social and political change we’re stuck in the swamps of human behaviour. We are giants in brain-power but we are pygmies of the spirit.

There is nothing new—or unusual—about the use or threat of force in the pursuit of national policy. There is nothing new in the fact that certain states are adding to that force in unprecedented ways, until they reach the gross indecencies of overkill. One thing, however, is new and it makes a vital difference. The super-states, with all their boasted absolute sovereignty, are afraid to use the power they have acquired. So our greatest danger is that war may occur, not by design, but by accident; or by conventional conflict escalating into nuclear conflict; or by a minor fight between smaller powers, each with a powerful friend whom it tries to involve in the conflict. It was in Sarajevo and Belgrade, not in Berlin or Moscow or Paris or London, that the massacre of 1914 began. And today the great powers have their hostages to fortune in Vietnam, Korea, Taiwan, Berlin, Albania, Cuba, Israel. A border skirmish—and they seem almost continuous—between Israeli and Arab forces could explode any time into an all-out war. Would the USA stand by and see Israel crushed with the help of Soviet arms? Would the USSR find it tolerable to see the Arab states, which it had armed a second time, defeated once again?

Indeed, this fear of involvement by miscalculation explains why the super-powers now accept provocations and insults from each other without active retaliation; why they accept them even from small countries who, 100 years ago, if they had attempted to bait a bigger power, would have been disposed of quickly and quietly by a gunboat or two. Now Civis Britannicus sum, or its equivalent in any other language, is no
longer enough to ensure that the watchful eye and the strong arm of your government will protect you from all harm. A British diplomatic representative can be detained and insulted in Peking; an American ship and its crew can be arrested off North Korea by a regime that is not even recognised by the United States, and held until the mighty super-power apologises. The Russians also have had their Cuban retreat. But the world goes on!

Let me return to my original question: where do we go now? In a rapidly changing world it is not easy to predict what will happen, let alone what should be done. But certain things stand out clearly—though that doesn’t necessarily mean we will do anything about them.

I must mention first the necessity of preventing the world becoming divided between the rich and the poor, into a few affluent societies surrounded by slums. It is not good enough to think of peace as merely the absence of war. Peace is progress. Peace is growth and development. Peace is welfare and dignity for all people. If, after the experiences of recent years, and in the field of international finance of recent weeks, we still think that nations, however proud and independent they may feel, can go it alone in these matters, then we are beyond redemption. Before long, in our affluent, industrial, computerised jet society, we shall feel the wrath of the wretched people of the world, and there will be no peace. I’m thinking not only of the ancient peoples of Asia and Africa. We too easily forget the restless multitudes of Latin America—an area which is destined to become of critical importance. Arnold Toynbee was right when he said that the West is now surrounded by the World.

As for that other division in our world, between communist and non-communist, it’s easy to state the problem and what should be done about it—and then despair, in the light of current events, about the possibility of doing anything either wisely or adequately or soon enough. Up to now most of the positive steps that have been taken have been due to the pressure of fear generated by crisis. But we’ll never find enduring peace, and the international machinery to maintain it, by staggering from one international crisis to another. So, notwithstanding the deplorable aggression against Czechoslovakia this summer, there must be a new and greater effort than ever before—and particularly through early discussions at the summit between Washington and Moscow—to bring about an East-West détente, better relations, especially, between the USA and the USSR. Failure here—and failure could be by omission as well as commission—could mean a return to the worst days of the Cold War.

One major objective should be the limitation of armaments by progressive stages, beginning with a freeze on existing levels and categories of weapons, a prohibition on the testing of new weapons, with international control and inspection, and a ban on the deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems. A next stage should be the reduction of all armaments; and, ultimately, the abolition of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons under national control. Pending this, steps should be taken to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms: otherwise within a few years many states will possess them, and an entirely new situation will arise in relations between states.

There is, of course, a treaty, now signed and open to accession by all nations, to stop nuclear proliferation. Its negotiation has been encouraging, but I doubt whether it will
achieve the goal desired. This treaty has worried certain non-nuclear states, India in particular, lest it might weaken their security against unfriendly nuclear neighbours. Some states, in effect, are being asked to rely on others for their protection against nuclear attack when those others will not bring their own nuclear weapons under any form of international supervision and control. It is not easy to ask countries like India, Pakistan, Germany, Brazil, Israel and others to accept a self-denying ordinance of this kind, unless they are satisfied as to the good faith and good intentions of the nuclear powers in pledging protection to them against nuclear attack. I know it is important that this Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty should become part of international law; I know also that it may well be as far as we can go in present circumstances. But it does not go far enough.

There must be a far greater effort made to limit and control armaments. We are losing our sense of priorities. Détente and disarmament must be put first and we’ve been forgetting this. Disarmament must be given a new impetus, a new urgency. What more important initiative could the new Administration in Washington now take? If it is not taken, or if it fails, it means a new arms race, and the dangerous consequences of a new arms race cannot be exaggerated.

The stability and the credibility of the nuclear deterrent, on which peace now precariously rests, would be weakened and probably destroyed: one phase of such an arms race would be the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems, as well as new attack missiles with multiple nuclear warheads. As the deterrent became more and more uncertain, more and more unstable, the temptation would increase to remove the danger by a surprise blow, relying on the power of your new attack weapons to pulverise your opponents and on the effectiveness of your new defence system to protect you against retaliation.

On the other hand, a détente between East and West would make it possible to organise peace and security on a new, more effective basis. It would also alter the whole European picture, and make possible contacts between members of Nato and the Warsaw pact, leading eventually, I would hope, to a balanced reduction of forces in Eastern and Western Europe. Among other things, this improvement would provide the best and perhaps the only chance for the smaller Warsaw countries to secure the right—which Nato members have never had to surrender—to develop nationally along lines of their own choosing. All this could only help the achievement of European unity—but unity brought about without the negative pressures of cold war, or even of too much dependence on the USA.

In this European integration, the United Kingdom would, I hope, become a full-fledged partner. Her participation would help Europe to become a powerful third force in the world, but without losing those Transatlantic ties which will continue to be vital and in my view must be maintained. In this new Europe—as has been forecast by the events of this autumn—Germany will be a strong and, I hope and believe, a constructive force. She will not be subordinate in any way to France or the United Kingdom. She will not have to rely so much as formerly on her cherished relationship with the US. But it is important that she should continue to face West. When she has turned to the East the results have been harsh—for Germany and for the world.
A détente could have another important result. It would reduce—even remove—the danger to peace which arises out of the dependent relationship between a smaller state and a big protector, where the smaller state may try to involve the larger in its fears, its quarrels and its ambitions. What must be done is to make the whole international community—not one single power—responsible for security and justice in special situations.

Israel provides a good example of what I mean. Some progress has been made in internationalising the problem of Israel’s relations with her Arab neighbours. The United Nations has become a safety valve against explosions. But there will be no real security until, first, Israel’s right to exist as a state is acknowledged by her neighbours; second, the conviction of those neighbours that they have been victimised by Israel’s aggression, and their fears that this will continue, have been removed; and third, support for one side from the USA and for the other from the USSR is made unnecessary and is ended.

If these points of danger could be resolved, it would then be possible, as it has always been desirable, for Israel, with all her technological and scientific know-how, to become a co-operating member of the community of semitic peoples in the Middle East. The substitution of welfare for warfare as a basis for relations in this danger area could mean so much for the economic development of the Arab states—and much for Israel as well. But it will require important concessions on both sides which neither Israel nor the Arab states have yet found it possible even to consider, at least in public. The reward for a settlement would be great. The penalty for failure to achieve it could be even greater.

The danger is increased by the apparent determination of the Soviet Union to build up her naval strength in the Mediterranean. In itself, this can hardly be criticised as long as the Mediterranean is an area of naval activity for other powers. But while Soviet policy aids and supports the UAR in its hostility to Israel, Moscow’s new naval moves become an inflammatory feature of an already dangerous situation. In no place could a détente between Washington and Moscow have more reassuring consequences than in the Middle East.

But when one talks about improvement of relations between the communist and non-communist world, it is foolish to restrict its importance to Europe or to the Middle East. South-East Asia and the Far East could well be the source of the greatest danger to peace in the years ahead, if something is not done to bring the 700 millions of Communist China into a better relationship with the rest of the world. The West has to take its share of responsibility for this failure; but in recent years most of the blame lies with Peking, among other things for its inhuman treatment of foreigners within its borders. Our responsibility is to make sure that if the Chinese government remains isolated, debarred from the responsibilities and the privileges of membership in the United Nations, this is their doing, not ours. The right response to Peking’s aggressive and bellicose attitude will not be easy to determine. It will require strength and patience and a long view of events. It should not, as I see it, mean the application to China of that rigid and doctrinaire policy of containment which has been abandoned in Europe for a wiser and more flexible reaction to communist provocations.
There are two other developments which could be of increasing importance in Asia. Japan will take more and more responsibility for Asian affairs, without, I hope, altering her friendly relations with North America. India and Pakistan will remain as strong states, but I hope with better relations with each other. The future of this subcontinent is in the balance, and that future could affect the peace of the whole world.

At the moment, however, we are more immediately concerned, in that part of Asia, with the problem of Vietnam. I can see no hope for peace and stability in South-East Asia as long as the war in Vietnam is not ended. Not by expulsion of the United States forces—no one has the power to do that in any event—nor by ‘scuttle and run’; the Americans don’t act that way and their friends should be glad that they don’t. But the United States may have to go more than half-way to meet the other side—as I believe they are now doing—in order to bring about a cease-fire, an armistice, a stage-by-stage withdrawal and a peace settlement. Vietnam must then be left to the Vietnamese, to work out their own destiny. This could best be ensured by an international guarantee of neutrality and security for the whole area and a massive programme of external aid.

In particular I know how easily the fears and tensions that make for conflict, and hinder co-operation, can be stirred up by our modern media of communication, which are able to induce a mass reaction that is very often thoughtless, prejudiced and aggressive—largely because the media concentrate on the kind of news that is the most exciting and therefore often the most likely to ‘produce a negative and even a combative result. Modern communications have brought man and his doings into everybody’s living-room. Too often they have done this in ways which help us to learn the worst of each other, and indeed have seemed to increase rather than reduce tension.

So, faced with these tensions and their accompanying frustrations, man looks today for solutions and security from decisive, determined and charismatic leaders. This usually means men certain of their own righteousness and confident in their own power; men who see all things in black and white, who are assertive and uncompromising, and who hold forth the hope of salvation through a simple principle of conduct to which all can cling, whether it’s socialism or free enterprise or vegetarianism or yoga or what-have-you; men who have final and absolute solutions for every problem.

But there are no final and absolute solutions. Perhaps one way to make progress to the distant scene of international peace and security is to recognise that the road is dark and difficult, and that calls to adopt this or that quick detour, which will not be lacking in appeal or confidence, will not help us. It is the Marxists who err most grievously in this regard, though even communist leaders are beginning to admit that Marxist-Leninism needs contemporary interpretation and application. But we of the West also too often look for solutions, not by honest thought and effort, but by noisy chants and slogans about our own superior values and systems. The very vigour with which we denounce each other’s panaceas shows our doubts about our own. We have a right, and indeed we have a duty, to proclaim and defend our own democratic concepts of freedom and our way of life; but we should realise that they don’t necessarily apply in the same way to all the variety of cultures and races, of social and economic systems, which make up today’s world. We would be wise to be humble: all
the more so because while we assert, as always, that we have God with us, our conduct too often seems not to be dictated by that sense of morality which, we are told by the theologians, distinguishes us from the lower animals, who have only behaviour mechanisms.

Arthur Koestler, in a lecture he gave last year at the University of Copenhagen, asked: ‘What has gone wrong with the evolution of man? Why is he the only animal that fights his kind without meaning?’ ‘Not,’ he says, ‘because man is too belligerent or aggressive, but because, on the contrary, he’s too easily deceived by appeals to his loyalty and his love. His infancy associations, his training and education as a child, the group community pressures to which he is later subjected, have made man not too little but too much of a social animal.’

I believe there is a good deal in this, but I have some difficulty in accepting the Koestler theory that the source of our trouble is not man’s original sin but man’s original goodness; that it’s not his aggressiveness but his agreeableness that has to be changed. In any event, this only transfers the guilt of aggression to rulers, who take advantage of this loyalty and submissiveness and whip the lambs into raging lions. Surely we know that the fault lies not in our rulers but in ourselves.

Fortunately there are signs, though not very clear or widespread as yet, of an awakening consciousness of impending doom, of the fact that, if man does not abolish war as an instrument of national policy and create the necessary international institutions to make this possible, then war will abolish him. Perhaps the changing nature of war itself can be taken as a hopeful sign. Until the present century, the waging of war has been a highly emotional and very often an attractive experience. The Charge of the Light Brigade or Custer’s Last Stand were not so much a deterrent against a repetition of killing as an incitement to it. It is surely more difficult to arouse this kind of ‘death or glory’ emotion about a guided missile or an anthrax germ. It’s not easy to strike heroic attitudes over the thought of a crusade with a computer. Therefore, it should be easier now to find a more appealing moral equivalent than modern war as a release for man’s aggressive emotional instincts, and to counteract what Freud described as man’s special death wish.

Whether we like it or not, war has been an outlet for the emotions of people, especially people who are deprived or dissatisfied at home. War offers everyone a chance to become involved to the utmost, to the exclusion of everything else, in a common endeavour, indeed in common sacrifice. Young people, I hope, will in the future be mercifully denied this kind of involvement which leads to killing and being killed. But too often they are now denied a more constructive channel for their energy, their concern, and their ideals. Until they are made to feel that they can participate with their elders in the running of things, they will continue to find their outlet in the mounting of barricades, in struggles for a greater freedom of whose nature they may not be very certain themselves. Can we find a way in which the energy, even the aggressiveness, of the young—indeed of all of us—can be applied to making the world better instead of worse? If we need a moral equivalent for war—and we do—we have it at hand in the challenge to attack poverty and deprivation and discrimination and injustice.
We must begin to operate on the principle that the interest of all men is above the national interest of any group of men. This may mean modifying our whole concept of the all-powerful sovereign nation-state; indeed, it must mean that. But could anything today seem to be less likely? At present, we take it for granted that the first duty of the government of any sovereign state is to defend the interests and wellbeing of its people and take whatever action is possible for that purpose. Yet we know that this action will not, in fact, produce the desired result.

When national policy fails to protect the public interest, it is nonetheless assumed that the state’s obligation to provide protection remains. But a similar failure in the international sphere throws doubt on the practicability or validity of the whole idea of effective international action. Barbara Ward has written: ‘The ever-tightening, thickening web of complete interdependence draws all the sovereignties, great and small, kicking and screaming, into a single planetary system. But the institutions to express this unity are so frail, so dependent upon sovereign vetoes of un-sovereign states, that they seem little more than the tribute of hypocrisy which vice pays to virtue, recognising its necessity by giving it the widest berth.’

People, therefore, must be made to see that internationalism is quite as important to them as national loyalty and interest. We must apply the science and art of politics to the affairs of the international community with the intensity of personal involvement that we give to domestic affairs. We must cultivate the international ideals, develop the international policies and attitudes, build up the international machinery and institutions, above all the United Nations, so that peace, security and progress can be maintained in the family of man.