

PROSPECTS OF MANKIND

September 25th, 1960

Season 2, Episode 1: "Britain: Ally or Neutral?"

Description: ER and her guests, Hugh Gaitskell, Bertrand Russell, Robert Boothby, and Robert MacKenzie, discuss Great Britain and its relationship with the United States.

Participants: ER, Hugh Gaitskell, Bertrand Russell, Robert Boothby, and Robert MacKenzie

[Image of BBC Telerecoding logo]

[Theme music begins 0:17]

[Title Sequence:] [Text overlaid on motion picture image of London] National Educational Television Presents/ Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt/ *Prospects of Mankind*

[As announcer speaks, film rotates through images related to the announcer's comments]

[Unknown announcer:] Britain and the United States have maintained a strong alliance, which reached its peak during World War II when London was the center of the Supreme Allied Command. That memory is embodied today in a busy square where the British have placed a statue of the war-time president of the United States. When in London, Mrs. Roosevelt comes to pay tribute. On this visit, she is here to discuss with leading Britons the present state of the Anglo-American alliance. Her guests are Hugh Gaitskell, socialist member of Parliament, leader of majesty's opposition, always a supporter of the Western alliance; Lord Boothby, an independent in the House of Lords, and a former conservative member of Parliament; Lord Russell, Bertrand Russell, the world famous philosopher and mathematician, who in recent years has been a leading exponent of nuclear disarmament and a neutral role for Britain in the Cold War. A growing public opinion backs this view point. These demonstrators from all walks of life and political parties are making a protest march to London from Aldermaston, site of Britain's atomic weapons installation. They say that since Britain can no longer afford to keep up in the nuclear arms race, their country would be safer from attack if Britain abandons the NATO alliance and gives up her own nuclear bombs. Others say this would lead to the very thing it's supposed to prevent: war. The disunity and resulting weakness of the Western alliance might encourage Soviet expansion or the even more militaristic Chinese. To hear both sides of this argument, Mrs. Roosevelt has been at the BBC studios in London where she recorded this program. Now here is Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] It is always a great pleasure to be in London again, and it's particularly interesting just now when a public debate is raging about just what Britain should do in regards to nuclear armament. I want to welcome our very distinguished guests. And would also like to welcome Mr. Robert McKenzie, a Canadian who is well-known as a television moderator here in Britain. He will help us explore this subject today.

[ER:] Lord Russell, you've been taking a leading part in this debate which is going on. We would be much interested to hear what you really think British policy should be?

[Bertrand Russell:] Well, I think, myself, that Britain should give up not only the personal possession and manufacture of nuclear weapons but all reliance on nuclear weapons for her own defense. I should like to see Britain become a neutral in the Cold War for a variety of reasons which I dare say we shall be able to go into soon.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Um well, for my part, I disagree very much with what Lord Russell said at the end of his remarks. I do not think it would be at all wise for us to give up the NATO alliance. Indeed, I think this would be profoundly dangerous to peace and freedom. I think, it would either mean the break up of the alliance, which would leave the whole of western Europe open to Soviet pressure or threats, or it might continue in a different form, in which case probably the role of Germany would be much stronger and we should have lost all our influence upon American policy, and, I think, the consequence would be a sharpening of the conflict between East and West.

[Robert Boothby:] Well, on this point, I am on Hugh Gaitskell's side. I think, it would be a great mistake for us to get out of NATO, although I think that NATO itself as an alliance leaves much to be desired and requires a radical revision of the whole of its political structure, uh but, I think, we must be in. At the same time I also think we should not have an independent nuclear weapon of our own. If NATO is to be an effective alliance and a real alliance then, I think, there should be one final deterrent for the alliance as a whole and that should be under the ultimate control and authority of the United States.

[ER:] Well, that puts a good deal of responsibility on the United States. Now, you advocate, Lord Russell, uh complete disarmament for Great Britain. Do you also advocate that for other countries?

[Bertrand Russell:] I didn't say complete disarmament. I said complete lack of nuclear weapons. I don't advocate it for the United States. Short of an agreement with Russia, I think that the United States government ought to do all it can to get a disarmament agreement with Russia. But I am not advocating unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons by the United States.

[Robert McKenzie:] You are not in that sense, Lord Russell, a pacifist? You do not advocate giving up all weapons by the Western countries?

[Bertrand Russell:] I have never been a complete pacifist. Never at any time. During the First World War, which I opposed, I explained that there have been wars that I would have supported, and I supported the Second World War completely. I'm not in any sense a theoretical pacifist.

[Robert McKenzie:] Then you would argue that there is a rational case for Britain alone giving up, or the countries of Western Europe giving up nuclear arms but not conventional arms? And could you give us the basic argument that lies behind this claim?

[Bertrand Russell:] Yes, I certainly could, and the argument is the same for all the satellites of the United States. The argument is -- well, It was first developed by a perfectly orthodox American, Herman Kahn, before the U-2 incident. And he pointed out that the Soviets could, if they chose, obliterate any one of the satellites of the United States, and that if they did so, in spite of obligations under NATO, it was likely that the United States would not go to war. He did not say this as a criticism of the United States and no more do I. But let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Britain has been completely wiped out so that we are all dead, which can be done in an hour quite easily. Let us suppose that has happened [Robert McKenzie: Through a Russian attack?] -- through a Russian attack. Then the president of the United States has to say, "Now, shall I, as a perfectly futile vengeance, decide that all the rest of the people in the world should die? What good would that do to anybody?" And if the president at the moment happened to be a rational man, which is a not impossible supposition, [ER laughs] then he would say, "No, in spite of NATO. It's no use. They're dead. I can't help those corpses." Now that was said in this article before the

U-2 incident. After the U-2 incident, [Nikita] Khrushchev and [Rodion] Malinovsky proclaimed very definitely that if any country allowed its territory to be used by the United States in ways that Russia thought offensive that country would be obliterated, wiped out, there should be nothing left of it they said. I see no reason to suppose that that was an empty boast, I think it is very likely quite true. And I think they could obliterate us completely without causing a general nuclear war. If they did cause a general nuclear war the argument would be still stronger.

[ER:] But, Lord Russell, I must say eh that in the first place it sounds very odd to me to have you talk about Western European countries as satellites of the United States. I don't think that it's the usual understanding of a satellite. My understanding of a satellite, in the Eastern hemisphere, is quite different from the feeling I would have about any of the Western countries, who are now allies, more or less closely allied with the United States. On the other hand, it seems to me that because Mr. Khrushchev made that remark about obliterating that allowed the United States to have bases on its soil or to be connected. That does not, of necessity, mean that being uh without arms would save the country or being a neutralist country would save you anyway. Your argument is that an American president, who was a rational man, would not, of course, come to the help of people who were wiped out. There is not much you can do for people once they are dead. But there would still be the consideration that you would be under Russian domination unless you did something to show that you uh were not going to let the Soviet Union wipe out one country after another. And without question I think it would lead to World War III. Now, I agree that World War III, to me, seems a very terrible thing because I don't see how we could save ourselves from being completely obliterated. On the other hand, I think the idea that uh a country being wiped out would-would make the United States think it had to accept that and do nothing, that seems to me totally impossible because you would then have capitulated to the power of Russia. You would let the Russians --

[Robert Boothby:] May I ask one point of Lord Russell? You see, he admitted in what he said that it was conceivable that this country could be wiped out by Russia in an hour, and that I entirely agree to. Now what I -- what puzzles me about his attitude is that I should have thought it was less likely to happen if we were known to be in alliance with the United States and that American retaliatory power would be definitely be used if that happened. [Robert McKenzie: Or might be.] -- Would be as part of an alliance than if we were in a neutralist position. Walter Lippmann has pointed out again and again that the only agreements that the Russians have kept have been geographical agreements, which laid down a line over which they couldn't go. They have never kept ideological agreements about democracy or anything like that, but on balance, they have kept military and geographical agreements which fixed a line. Now, I'd rather be on our side of that line than in a nebulous, neutralist position. I think the risk of a general conflagration and certainly the risk of this country being wiped out would be much less.

[Bertrand Russell:] May I answer that? And I should like also to answer your points. [Bertrand Russell looks at ER] In the first place, as to the word 'satellite', I don't care two-pence. You can alter it and call it merely allies of the United States. The word, I don't care about; we can let that be. But, I think, that what I should say otherwise is this: that so long as our territory is used by American military forces, as it is at present, and as it must be under NATO, so long the Russians have a motive for attacking us. I think it would be a most appalling thing if they did. I don't think we should be quite safe if we were out of NATO, but we should be safer because I don't think they would not have the same motive. They don't, as a matter of fact, attack the uncommitted nations -- I can't think of any case where they have -- and if we were uncommitted I do not believe they would attack us. I don't say the situation would be pleasant. I don't think it would. But I do think that the supposed protection that we derive from NATO is utterly illusory. I think, the countries that are in NATO -- the governments of them, the American government as well as the others, believe it is a real protection, but I think they deceive themselves, it isn't. And I think we should be in less danger if we were out of it. I don't say we would have no danger.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] May I just pursue that just a little further? It seems to me that the crux of this matter is what the Russians really are likely to do. Now what you are arguing, Lord Russell, is really this: you are saying, they're not going to believe that the Americans are going to strike even second, even if one of their allies is attacked, even presumably if they hear, they get to know that a rockets are on their way; they don't think it's going for them and they keep clear. Now that's what you believe because otherwise obviously your argument falls to the ground, doesn't it? Nevertheless you think the Russians are so frightened of Britain being an ally of America that they will all the same attack. Now this doesn't seem to me to add up at all.

[Bertrand Russell:] Oh, I think it adds up this way, if I may interrupt you, that the Russians do not like Americans having bases near Russia.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] But you have already agreed that the Russians aren't even frightened of the Americans hitting back. Now. Why? Because, according to your argument, the Russians believe the Americans will be so frightened of themselves being obliterated. Now if that is the case, the Russians will certainly say to themselves there is no possible danger of America making the first strike. And therefore, in these circumstances, I cannot see the reason for the Russians taking this action, and I return to uh Boothby's point, if I may, What I cannot understand in your argument is this: that you really believe the Russians are more likely to attack us when, despite your argument, there must remain the possibility, the very real possibility, of retaliation. But, all the same, if we are neutral, and there is nobody to come to our aid to defend us at all, [Robert Boothby: That's right.] Then Russians will leave us alone. It simply doesn't seem to me to make sense. I mean, either the Russians are really very peacefully minded and not frightened at all, in which case they won't attack us, or if they are, on the contrary, ruthless expansionists, then, if we are alone, I think we can say goodbye to freedom. (16:21)

[Bertrand Russell:] May I ask you this one question: why do you think that the Russians are not attacking all the other uncommitted nations of the world?

[Robert Boothby:] I would like to smash in here for just a second, if I may, to say because of the balance of power. I'm old fashioned maybe, but I really do believe in the balance of world power. I think NATO re-established that when it was formed. I think, on the whole it has been maintained for the last ten years. I hope that it will be maintained indefinitely. I am not saying at what level it should be maintained --that is a subject for negotiation and agreement. I hope in future years it may be at a level less crippling to the economies of both the communist world and the free world. But I do believe, genuinely and sincerely, that it is the balance of power that has prevented a war from breaking out in the last ten years, and that, and that alone, will prevent a third world war.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] And I would just like to add this, if i may. You asked me the question, "Why don't they attack the uncommitted countries," India, for instance. I should say, first because they are frightened of a nuclear war. I think they are perfectly sensible people. I think they are quite cautious people. I don't think the Russians are going to take enormous risks, but I do think that if they can achieve the expansion of communism without any cost to themselves, by mere threats, and they know there is virtually no risk of any retaliation, I think they will take advantage of that.

[Bertrand Russell:] Why do you think they have not done it in India?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, I think they haven't done it in India, first of all, because India is in fact a peculiarly well-defended country geographically. It has a mountain range on one side, and it has sea on the other. [Bertrand Russell: But that doesn't protect bombings.] I think they also don't know where this

is going to end. After all, Pakistan is involved. Pakistan happens to be in the SEATO alliance. They don't know what America will do in those circumstances.

[Robert McKenzie:] Could I come in here and suggest that it seems to me while the weight of the panel is obviously against Lord Russell's argument, that this is a balance of risks. Lord Russell has said he is not an absolute pacifist, and therefore doesn't belong to a category of people who would dispose of both the nuclear weapons and conventional weapons on principle. But he has argued on balance that the risk is less for Britain and Western Europe if it gets out of the NATO alliance and disposes of its own nuclear weapons. And others in the panel --clearly a majority --have taken a contrary view: that the balance of risk is far greater on the other side, in their view. Well, obviously, we can't resolve this; it's a mathematical calculation of risk. And one must, in some sense should defer to Lord Russell's mathematics. [Robert McKenzie laughs.] [Hugh Gaitskell: Not so mathematical. Not so mathematical.]

In any event, I think we ought, if we may, to turn to what is after all is a real position emerging now in Britain, namely that quite apart from those who take the position Lord Russell has personally, a huge body of British opinion within the trade union movement, and we may well expect it in the Labour Party, has begun to adopt apparently a considerable part of Lord Russell's argument. We have seen in recent weeks the Trades Union Congress in Britain adopting two resolutions on defense: one of which supported the NATO alliance, and one of which, one's bound to say, appeared to be against NATO alliance and against bases in this country -- American bases in this country. And this second resolution adopted by the Trades Union Congress was carried by a greater majority than support for the official position. Now, Mr. Gaitskell, I think it's up to you to let us know how far has this support for unilateral disarmament and getting out of NATO gone in one of the two great parties in this country?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, I want first of all to say, regarding the Trades Union Congress debates, that you see the issue was not framed clearly in the resolutions. There was no debate on the resolution "Britain should withdraw from NATO." I pay tribute to Lord Russell in this because he is perfectly honest about it, [Robert Boothby: That's right.] and he comes out into the open, and he says "We should get out." That is not what was said at the T.U.C. The anti-NATO resolutions were withdrawn in favour of one that, to say the least, was ambiguous. It didn't even mention unilateral disarmament, and it could -- you could put upon it what interpretation you liked. With the result that one union, as you know, voted both ways on this.

[Robert McKenzie:] Ah but you have the interpretation of the main supporter of this resolution, namely Cousins, Frank Cousins, the head of the biggest union, who made it pretty clear, I think, that he himself was against Britain relying on any nuclear weapons, whether her own or those of the United States, which clearly means "American bases get out," and clearly means we assume the end of NATO.

[Robert Boothby:] May I ask one question of Gaitskell because I think it is extremely important. Does he think -- he may not know, I don't know -- that Cousins himself accepts the full implication of his unilateral disarmament policy, namely that we should get out of NATO? Because he didn't say so specifically at the Trade Union Congress. Does Cousins, and do the people who follow Cousins, do they really want to get out of NATO. We are quite clear about Lord Russell, he does. Do they? (21:24)

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, I can't answer that question, it is for them. But I think the question needs to be put and put again and again, because this argument has not been clear, and the real issue is just this: are we-- when we say we are against, as that resolution said, um-um any policy based on nuclear weapons, do we mean, in effect, that we say to our allies in NATO, "Give up nuclear weapons even though the Soviet hangs on to them." And if they say no, do we then say: "Right, we clear out of the alliance?" Now these questions have never been answered.

[Unknown speaker: No.]

[Robert McKenzie:] In fact, of course, their position would go beyond Lord Russell's position. In saying the Americans should give up nuclear weapons as well.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] It would. It would. That's quite true. That is quite true. But you see, that is because Lord Russell has been perfectly frank and says, "Well, I am for neutralism. I am for getting out of NATO." [Looks at Bertrand Russell] I'm sorry. We can go on with the Labour Party discussion.

[Bertrand Russell:] May I be allowed to state the whole thing a little? Because I think he's getting a little confused. There are two entirely distinct questions. One is the international situation and the other is the British situation. [Unknown speaker: Yes.] As regards the international situation, [Unknown speaker: Yes, agreed.] if I had anything to do with it I should say the greatest disaster that can possibly happen is an all-out nuclear war, and I should propose to both the Russians and the Americans to sign a statement that an all-out nuclear war would be a greater disaster than the world-wide victory of the other side. I should like both sides to sign that. And on that basis-- if they both agreed to that, then, I think, you could begin to negotiate about disarmament and so forth. But all that by negotiation. That is the international situation. The national situation for the British is quite different. We think that the Americans are -- the American government is unduly warlike, we think it is not genuinely in favor of disarmament--

[Robert McKenzie:] "We" meaning those hold your views? [Bertrand Russell: Yes.] Your position is Americans are unduly warlike.

[Bertrand Russell:] Yes, but I think there are a great many people hold that view, many who wouldn't agree with the rest of what I want to say would hold that. We think that when they propose a disarmament resolution, it is only because they know it won't be carried. And if they thought there was any chance of its being carried, they wouldn't propose it. And we say that while we hope we should be willing to die for a principle, we are not willing to die for the murderous antics of the Pentagon.

[some crosstalk]

[Robert Boothby:] No, I-I-I -- just to come in first. But I am astonished that Lord Russell should attach any value at all to a statement of that kind. That's just the kind of agreement or alleged agreement that I think the Soviets have never carried out and never will. I would remind him of a thing called The Kellogg Pact, which was very similar to the sort of statement that he wants the Americans and the Russians to sign now. It proved to be not worth the paper it was written on. Everybody solemnly pledged themselves never to go to war again, or use warlike weapons, and look what happened.

[some crosstalk]

[Robert McKenzie:] I think in a moment we will return --

[Bertrand Russell:] I entirely -- May I say I entirely agree with you about that. And I shouldn't attach any importance to this, unless I thought that both sides were honestly were convinced of this thing. Otherwise I think it's just like the Kellogg Pact.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I think both side probably --

[Robert McKenzie:] Could I promise that we'll come back -- could I promise that we'll come back to an assessment of Soviet motives when we look at disarmament? But I want to be sure we look a little closer at what is happening with the Labour Party because here I think -- whatever distinguished individuals may say about unilateral disarmament -- we have apparently the possibility of one of the two major

political parties in this country committing itself to unilateral disarmament. Now I think Mr. Gaitskell owes it to us to say how near this prospect appears to be with the conference coming up in October of the Labour Party.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, I uh what I will do is to try to make perfectly plain what the issues are here. As far as the executive committee, the leadership of the Labour Party, and indeed of the Trades Union Congress is concerned, and the Parliamentary Labour Party by an overwhelming majority, this is our view. Namely, first, that of course we must put as absolutely top priority the strengthening of the UN and ultimately world government, as the only final solution of this problem. Secondly, that we must continue - and here I don't think there is any disagreement between any of us -- uh to do everything in our power to achieve multilateral disarmament. I'll come back to the Pentagon later. Thirdly, however, that the UN being what it is, with the veto, with the division of the world into two blocs, you cannot expect the Security Council to defend, or the UN to defend, any country that is attacked. And therefore, because of that, you have to have allies of your own. And we believe that NATO was formed for that reason and has been a major force in preventing war and that we should remain in NATO. On the other hand, we take the view -- uh sorry, we also say that so long as the Soviet Union possesses nuclear weapons then the Western alliance somewhere should have them too.

[Robert McKenzie:] And do you also say that your official position that uh Britain should agree to have American bases?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I'm coming to that, if I may, Bob. Then, we say on the other hand, that so long as the West has the power of retaliation, therefore, the deterrent theory applies. As far as we are concerned in Britain, that is a different issue. I agree with Russell there, the question of what Britain does, and what we do in the international, so in the West does, must be distinguished. Now we believe that the time has come for Britain to give up the idea of having their own independent nuclear deterrent. And that time, indeed, has been forced upon us, so to speak, by the decision of the government. However, in our view a right decision to abandon the Blue Streak Rocket. To put it in another way, when-when you're- when you're discussing the whole immensely complicated field of rockets carrying hydrogen bombs, we have to face the fact that America spends on research and development in this field alone more than the whole of our defense expenditure. And in these circumstances, we think it is foolish to compete with her, and here I agree with Boothby that we should leave the provision of the nuclear deterrent to the United States, though remaining members of NATO ourselves. [Robert McKenzie: And allowing American bases to continue in this country. Nuclear bases.] On the bases question, this is our position: it is not a matter of principle, that you either say to the Americans "No bases," or you say to the Americans, "Take anything you like, bring anything you like." Obviously, you must discuss this on the basis of the merits. Now we are against the Thor missiles. That, as it happens, is not an American base because the Thor missiles are manned by British troops. But we think they are a peculiarly foolish and vulnerable weapon, a first-strike weapon. They could be eliminated immediately, and we have always been against them on those grounds. But as far as the bases are concerned, it is a matter of negotiation. But I would certainly -- uh could not -- you could not remain, in my opinion, in an alliance and refuse to do what you believe to be militarily necessary for that alliance.

[Robert McKenzie:] Well now, this position you've outlined, Mr. Gaitskill, that appears to be crumbling, to outside observers, within the whole labor movement. It appeared to be crumbling at the Trade Union Congress meeting in September, and there are many predictions that it is going to be overthrown in October at the Labour Party conference. Now what is going to be your position, uh as leader of the Labour Party, if the position you are fully committed to is overthrown at the Labour Party conference.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well now, you're asking me the sort of question, Mr. McKenzie, that you're almost bound to ask me in a radio interview immediately preceding the conference. [Robert McKenzie: I hope

I'll have the opportunity.] [ER laughs] I think, however, that my attitude and position on this is sufficiently well known. It was even referred to in the opening remarks. That I suggest we keep to the Labour Party policy and not what the present leader of the Labour Party is going to do in certain hypothetical conditions.

[Robert Boothby:] May I ask, just to push one little button. At the moment, the Strategic American Air Command's front line bases are in this country. And it seems likely that if we are to be able effectively to deliver the deterrent weapon, that must continue at least for some time to come. I would be agree with you and admit that this is probably only a temporary problem, [Hugh Gaitskell: Yes.] Covering the next two or three years only. Ultimately, I suppose, we shall have these horrible Sputniks floating round, each one loaded with an atomic bomb which can be ordered to home on a particular base. One of them might fall down by accident and that would be most unfortunate for all concerned. But for the next three or four years, I should imagine it will be necessary if we are to match the Russians -- to come back -- coming back to my balance of power -- to match the missile strength of the Russians we must have the front line of SAC here in this country. Would you agree as I-- that that is necessary? I think it is.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I think it probably is, and I said earlier on, if it is military necessary in the interests of the alliance, we could not, in my opinion, refuse it.

[Robert McKenzie:] Not a moral issue?

[Robert Boothby:] Not a moral issue.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] It's not a moral issue. No, it isn't.

[Robert McKenzie:] Now isn't it perfectly --

[Bertrand Russell:] Do you think I would be allowed to say a few words. [Robert Boothby laughs]

[some crosstalk]

[Hugh Gaitskell:] [Tapping Bertrand Russell on wrist] May I just finish with him on the Labour Party and the TUC? [Bertrand Russell: Yes.] I only want to remind him that the Trade Union Congress in fact endorsed the statement on defense, which I was trying very briefly to expound just now.

[Robert McKenzie:] By a smaller majority- by a smaller majority than the other.

[Bertrand Russell:] By a trick, a dishonest trick.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Not in the least a dishonest trick. On the contrary.

[Robert Boothby:] By a silly trick. A foolish trick.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I will not allow myself to be drawn -- Not a silly trick either --I won't allow myself to be drawn into a discussion of the exact meaning of certain resolutions and what they mean and why they were put forward in that form. There is more than one thing to be said about dishonesty in this matter.

[Robert McKenzie:] I think we've got to turn now to look very briefly at the position -- the official British position -- on this whole matter. Now--

[Bertrand Russell:] Look, I wish you would allow me to make a few statements [unclear terms]

[Robert McKenzie:] Yes, indeed. You can lead us back into Lord Boothby and the official British position, which you are perfectly at liberty to attack. Let's hear that too.

[Bertrand Russell:] Well, I want to talk a little about the Labour Party in this issue. It is generally assumed in the press that if the Labour Party goes unilaterally it is done for and won't get a majority for God knows how long. Now my own belief, and this based upon a good deal of knowledge of opinion, is that that's the exact opposite of the truth. I think, the Labour Party has been losing in recent years because it didn't stand for anything much, and I think that the young especially, of whom I know a great many, have a feeling that it would be rather nice to be allowed to grow up, and that if the present policies of the world continue they will have very little chance of reaching maturity before they're dead. And that feeling is really very widespread, and the party that appealed to it would, I think, before long sweep the country. That is my quite deliberate opinion, based upon an astonishing growth of that way of looking at things.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, I can only say that I don't agree with that. [Bertrand Russell: No, I know.] That I disagree with it. But in any event, uh this is an issue of such profound importance that I don't think we should make up our minds on it according to whether we think this young person or that is moving this way or that. If I think, as I do, that the policy you're advocating is profoundly dangerous then I am going to oppose it.

[Bertrand Russell:] But look, every policy is dangerous. The policy you are advocating --

[Hugh Gaitskell:] But I think your policy is even more dangerous. It's as dangerous, with respect, as the policy you advocated before the last war, which was one of appeasement to Hitler. You know that's true.

[Robert McKenzie:] There's a danger we'll go back too far, I think, if we do that. I want Boothby to say, very briefly, how the official government position, the government he used to support before he became an Independent, how it differs from the position that the Labour Party -- the official position the Labour Party still holds.

[ER:] At some point, too, I want to say something in answer to Lord Russell on one or two points.

[Robert McKenzie:] We'll give you a blanket reply after we've heard from --

[ER:] Afterwards. Ok.

[Robert Boothby:] Well, I think from a purely practical point of view, the government's position does not greatly differ from Gaitskell's position.

[Robert McKenzie:] Oh, but they want to keep the nuclear power.

[Robert Boothby:] They don't make it clear what they want. You see, they say we -- they want us to be a nuclear power. But at the same time, in fact, they abandoned that. They've given up, as Gaitskell said, the Blue Streak weapon, and at the moment we are not a nuclear power. Now I would be very reluctant to see us ever becoming a nuclear power again. I want to get right in with the United States. Admittedly it throws, as Mrs. Roosevelt has said, a grave responsibility on the United States, well I'm afraid that as a great power, and the only great power in the Western alliance, that is a responsibility they have got to accept. We accepted it, after all, in the nineteenth century. It was British sea power that really kept the peace of the world. I believe in the twentieth century it is American nuclear power that is going to keep the peace of the world, and we should accept that. I would give all the advice -- scientific advice, assistance, bases, to the Americans that they require. But I wouldn't attempt to set ourselves up as an

independent nuclear power as De Gaulle wants to do with France, for one quite simple reason amongst others, we can't afford it. [Unknown speaker: Yeah.] We simply haven't got enough money to do it. Now I think in practice, if not in theory, that is the government's position. You see, the great thing about the Conservatives is --and that's why they are always elected in this country --they don't have theories, [Unknown speaker: They don't have policies.] they don't have these policies that Lord Russell advocates, they do not have anything. Except they do go on -- purely empiricists from their point of view, and do what seems to be best at any given moment, and if things are going a bit better than they were, as quite often they do and were at the last election, they win the election-election. They won the election. It's this awful thing of pinning yourselves down to specific concrete, idealistic policies, which probably will never be carried out, that is the misfortune of the Labour Party. And if a government does not need to do this, why an opposition should think it necessary to do so is beyond my comprehension. [Laughing]

[Robert McKenzie:] That's a profoundly different problem. Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] I-I only want to come back to the paper that you said you wanted to see signed. Quite aside from uh signing a paper of that kind.

[Robert McKenzie:] That is each side renouncing uh nuclear weapons.

[ER:] Each side renouncing, but you added --

[Bertrand Russell:] I didn't say they should renounce it. [ER: No, no.] I said they should recognize that that was the greatest misfortune which could happen.

[ER:] You said that in the paper we would recognize that a nuclear war was the greatest misfortune that could happen, and that in preference to that, either side winning would be better. Now that I would not be willing to sign, and I doubt if you could get it signed by most of the people of the United States.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, you wouldn't get it signed by Russia.

[Bertrand Russell:] May I interrupt for a moment, would you -- do you mean that most people would think it better there should be no human beings than that?

[ER:] I think most people in the United States, perhaps partly because they do not know, or really realize, that there would be no human beings, but in any case they would say: "If we have to be dominated by the Soviet Union we would rather be wiped out." And I think, I'm sorry, but I think that is the majority opinion still in the USA.

[Bertrand Russell:] It would be--the Soviet Union could also be wiped out. I mean, the thing you have got to face is would you rather have no human beings at all existing or have worldwide dominion of the Soviet government?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Oh now, with great respect, you know this is not the question. [ER: no] This is not the question. This is the whole point really. You see, we don't believe that is the alternative. We believe it's possible to have both freedom and peace so long [ER: Well, that's what I agree with.] as we retain, in the West, the nuclear deterrent. And that is the main difference.

[ER:] And I also --

[Bertrand Russell:] No, that isn't the difference. You misunderstood what I meant. What I was simply putting this alternative: if you had to choose between there being no human beings and there being a universal dominion of the Soviets, if you had that choice, which would you choose?

[ER:] That is no choice. That is not the choice.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Yes, but you see, I think the questions we can discuss are the real questions and not the hypothetical question.

[Robert Boothby:] Well, he has put a hypothetical question, Lord Russell, which I would rather like to answer. He hasn't always in his writings in the past taken that high an opinion of human beings as such. He is now giving them tremendous importance. Judging by their behavior in the course of the last fifty years there have been moments when I was not at all sure in my own mind that it would not be better if the whole thing packed up because they are behaving like lunatics most of the time, and the 1939-45 war was a piece of raging, hideous lunacy, and I should not like to see it repeated. Therefore, I would like to ask this hypothetical question straight, to answer it. I would much rather see the whole thing blown up much than turned into a Communist world. I mean, if that was the alternative I would say, let's go on somewhere else, and see if we can't do better there than we can here. But what we are trying to do, those of us who think, like I think, basically Gaitskell and myself and Mrs. Roosevelt, is to try and stop that happening -- and you -- to try to stop happening-- You think one course is more dangerous, we think the other one is safer, but our object, after all, is to save the human race, although I doubt sometimes myself if it deserves it.

[Robert McKenzie:] In other words, we have come back to the point that it is a balance of risks.

[ER:] It is a balance of risks. There is no question about that. [Robert McKenzie: Yup.] But I don't think any signed paper would remove that risk.

[Bertrand Russell:] Nor do I. Nor do I. Please don't -- what I think would remove the risk would be a genuine belief on the part of governments that that was a thing to face.

[ER:] Well, I would like to say that I think -- I cannot speak for our present administration -- I do not happen to be a Republican [laughter] [Unknown speaker: That's an understatement.] and I do not happen to be on the inside of information -- but when you say you cannot agree with Pentagon policies, uh I think sometimes you have to balance what you hear about the influence on an administration of the Army, which is practically what the Pentagon uh means, and the general feeling of the country. I would say that the people of our country um would not be in agreement if the policy was uh one of aggression. They -- you say that the general opinion is that the United States is in favor of war. I would say the United States was opposed to war and anxious to find ways. [Unknown speaker: Yes. Yes.] Now at the present time, we still -- a certain number of us, and powerful people, believe that this balance of military power must be kept. I am hopeful that we are going to find ways, and one of the things that worries me is that we do not think more about the fact of how we move towards mutual total disarmament because, in the end, that is the only safe thing for us all. And um, I think much thought everywhere should be brought to bear on even the smallest first move that can be made. I would like to see any little step forward. And I think, that is the attitude of the American people, and I am willing to acknowledge that the Pentagon is -- perhaps naturally, being military people -- they may have more military ideas than I have, for instance, more than some other people. But I cannot help believing that the real difficulty is not going to be solved by neutralism. It is possible that it will be solved better by active thinking and influence, by-- through participation of all-all of the group in Western Europe of how-how they can most safely take each step which brings us into some kind of agreement with the Soviet Union. And I think the Chinese at present are as much of a problem as the Soviet Union, if not more so. So that I have a feeling that it's not a

question of saying the United States shall take the full responsibility. Perhaps from an economic point of view, we are the people who can afford it for the time being. Perhaps this is an area in which we must make a major contribution. But I don't feel that NATO's only responsibility can be carried out purely by military work. I think something has to come out of this union of the West in the way of new and fresh approaches [Robert Boothby: Here, here.] to some kind of understanding so that we can live together.

[Robert Boothby:] But Mrs. Roosevelt--

[Robert McKenzie:] I think we ought to come, in a moment, if you agree to look at possible beginnings of the disarmament problem. But could we just take a moment also to look at feelings here in Britain and Western Europe about the so-called Anglo-American alliance and the present condition of NATO? Because I think it would be unfair if we didn't allow American viewers especially, and others as well, to appreciate the degree to which there is uneasiness about certain features of this relationship. Perhaps as a starting point I could illustrate this by saying -- having been recently in Canada, for example, there was a great deal of apprehension about the fact that people there felt, and I'm sure It's true here, on a matter such as the recognition of Communist China, to take an illustration, the American position is so inflexible that the chances of easing tension between East and West seem to be drastically minimized.

[ER:] But I think you do not realize that that American position is changing. I can take any group in the United States and talk, or-- and put before them the fact uh that you cannot have ever real disarmament 'til you have total membership in the United Nations and get entire agreement from an enormous audience.

[Robert Boothby:] Yes, but, Mrs. Roosevelt, wouldn't you also agree that at the moment NATO is in a terrible mess? You see, there is no political direction at present of NATO at all. You have an invisible strategic committee of ourselves and the United States in Washington; you have an impotent council of second-grade officials in Paris which can do nothing; you have a Supreme Commander taking orders from a vacuum; and you have no coordination, no centralized policies at all. In fact, we are conducting a global war, the West against the forces of Communism, without any central organ of political decision.

[ER:] I couldn't agree with you more, and for some time I have been wondering uh quite seriously--but this does not represent, remember this represents a personal opinion and not a political party's opinion even -- um I have wondered for some time whether as it was at the present time, NATO, which had been created to meet certain conditions which no longer exist, because you will remember that NATO was created to stop the possibility of Russian army sweeping across Europe.

[Robert Boothby]: But it was hoped to expand it into a political commonwealth.

[ER:] Yes. And-and this I do not think at present has occurred. And therefore, I am not at all sure that we that do not need serious revision along many ways of the NATO organization. And whether it could be made really what it ought to be, which is a strong group of people thinking alike on western -- in the western part of Europe and with America included and actually working towards ways to find agreement.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] This seems to me a wonderful opportunity for us to tell the American people uh what we would like them to do. And I would say, first of all, we would like them to revise their China policy. It is not because we have any illusions about China but because we believe that the isolation of China is one of the worst things that is happening at the moment. It is this that is partly responsible for the Chinese line on the ideological struggle with Russia and their belief that war is inevitable. And therefore, we think that China should be recognized and brought into the UN, and that is pretty universal here. [Robert Boothby: Yes, I quite agree.] Then I would say, secondly, uh we want to see a policy in NATO which does not rely so much upon the use of nuclear weapons. This, I think, is also the view of some American forces, but at

the moment the danger is that even quite a small outbreak or attack from the East is to be met by nuclear weapons, and this really will not do. The emphasis must be shifted onto conventional and away from nuclear.

[Robert McKenzie:] Does that mean, though, that Britain ought to be prepared also to contribute largely conventional forces?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well I think we should certainly be prepared to go back at least to what we promised we would do some years ago before divisions in Europe.

[Robert McKenzie:] Even if it meant restoration of national service?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I don't think it would mean that. It can be done, in my opinion, quite easily by increased mobility, by liquidating some of the commitments, which I think are pretty pointless ones that we have abroad, and by considerably greater efficiency in conventional arms.

[Robert Boothby:] Just one point of interruption, I think that is an illusion, you know. I do not think that we can carry out our commitments in the conventional force field without a restoration of limited national service, and, I think, that sooner or later any British government will be forced to face up to that. But I am alone in that view.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] I-I-I would only disagree on that. I think it can be done. [ER: You and I --] Then I think, second -- thirdly, it is enormously important that American policy should be directed against the spread of nuclear weapons within NATO and that is one of the reasons why we also believe we should not have our own.

[ER:] I-I could not again, as an individual, agree with you more. [Hugh Gaitskell: Good, good.] I think every time we spread the ownership or the possibility of having nuclear weapons we increase the danger of an accident, [Robert Boothby: Yes.] which, I think, is just as dangerous.

[Robert Boothby:] Exactly, exactly.

[Robert McKenzie:] Although, Mrs. Roosevelt, it's curious, you know, I have attended the two American conventions this summer, it is curious how unaware people making policy in the two parties appear to be of this kind of problem. I was, on the whole, very encouraged by the lack of chauvinism and so on, although all kinds of provocations were being delivered by Khrushchev at the same time. But there's a curious blankness when it comes to appreciating the kind of worry you get here in Western Europe about, say, the universal spread of nuclear weapons.

[ER:] You couldn't-- you are entirely right because we are far removed and we do not understand-- we do not understand the feeling. I have just been in Poland. Mr. Gaitskell has just been in Yugoslavia. How many people in our country, except perhaps the little groups that came from Poland and Yugoslavia, have the remotest idea of the fears in those two countries?

[Robert Boothby:] Or that they themselves are in fact in range of Russian missiles at this moment, in the United States? [ER: Well, of course--] They don't know that because they do not want to know.

[ER:] Well, of course, the truth of the matter is, and I've been wondering for a long time, that I think actually the people in Europe are far safer from attack from the Soviet Union than we are in the United States. Because Mr. Khrushchev himself said to me-- he gave me a timetable of how long it would take him, if we had nuclear war -- this was some years ago, three years ago in fact -- to destroy the whole of

Europe and then start on the United States. Today I am sure he would reverse his timetable and tell me how long it would take him to destroy the major points that he wished to destroy in the United States. So in that case, you in Europe would not have to be destroyed, but you would be slaves.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] But you know, I don't really think the problem, I may be optimistic here, but I don't believe it is so much now the imminent danger of war; it is how to achieve peace; it is how to get away from the stalemate, the Cold War, call it what you like. [ER: An awareness on our part is important--] But it does mean, and this is the only other point that I want to make about our view, anyway, in the Labour Party. We do want to see the West taking a much more positive line towards the settlement of outstanding disputes.

[Some crosstalk]

[Robert McKenzie:] Let's start with - Let's start with disarmament, the one that Mrs. Roosevelt said. Which is obviously the all-important question. I think we ought to bring our minds to bear on the question, granted the failures in this whole field of disarmament, where as of now do we begin to try to make headway? Now, Lord Russell, apart from any transcendental view of how you eliminate the whole problem, how do you think we begin with the problem of attempting to make some kind of headway, however small, on disarmament?

[Bertrand Russell:] Well, I think, the government can always put forward disarmament proposals, and hitherto they've never done so-- no power has done so sincerely. I think--

[Robert McKenzie:] How can you be sure of that?

[Bertrand Russell:] Well, because you can see that it is so. They put forward-- now in 1955 we had the most frightful shock because the Russians accepted our proposals, so we withdrew them at once. They were only put forward on the assumption that the Russians would reject them, and that is so all the way through. On both sides. I am not saying this specially of our side; it is true on both sides. And I think one would have to try to get some agreement about disarmament before putting forward a public proposal--

[Robert McKenzie:] You mean, a far more secret negotiation and less a public one.

[Bertrand Russell:] Yes -- and also this, that we should make more use of the neutrals because at present each side puts forward a proposal and the other side has to object to it: it is part of the rules of the game. I mean you can't kick the other fellow's football towards -- it's the rule of the game that there has to be argument. I should try to get some neutral power to make proposals which appear to it to be impartial [Robert McKenzie: India, as it were, perhaps.]—India, yes, perhaps—and something which appear to lean to neither side particularly, which neither side is proposing, and therefore neither side has reasons of prestige for rejecting it. I should do this rather quietly and secretly and get the two sides if possible to agree before there was any publicity, and then I think they could jointly put forward such a proposal.

[Robert McKenzie:] Others briefly on this too?

[Hugh Gaitskell:] Well, yes, only -- I think it only fair to say that the immediate situation has been created by Russia walking out of the Ten-Power Disarmament Conference.

[Bertrand Russell:] That is so, yes.

[Hugh Gaitskell:] And one must say that. They have been extremely difficult about any kind of negotiation on controls, which naturally the West want to establish until everything else is agreed, and that won't do. But I agree with Russell. I think that it would be a very good gesture if the West were to propose the presence of both China and India at the disarmament talks. I personally would go back to the Ten-Power Committee. I don't think that eighty powers are going to produce anything at all. I think that on the testing we have made some progress but it ought to be possible there to-to uh clear up the few remaining points which divide the two sides. And I think there again you get a small step forward. I would like to see the West also put forward the idea of a control of zone - of controlled zone- -a zone of controlled disarmament in central Europe because this would give some reassurance to the Poles and the other countries that Mrs. Roosevelt was talking about. Initiatives of this kind patiently put forward, expecting a zig-zag policy by the Russians because we shall certainly have that. We have to keep going on patiently in this way.

[ER:] But that won't satisfy Sir [unclear term]

[Robert Boothby:] I'm afraid I am in considerable disagreement with both Russell and Gaitskell on this. I am no fan of disarmament conferences. I have seen too many of them fail, and I believe that basically armaments are a symptom of political conditions. And therefore, that before you get a really substantial reduction of armaments you've got to solve some of your political problems, and that that should have priority. It is no good talking about disarmament proposals when you have rising political tensions all over the world. Tackle the political problems first. But there is one point that Gaitskell made which I think is extremely important. A geographical disengagement in Europe would be of immense value. Which brings me right back to where we started. that I think geographical lines, geographical agreements, are the only ones that the Russians really understand and accept, so I think we ought to work for that.

[ER:] I'm sorry our time is drawing to a close. I want to thank all three of my distinguished guests, as well as you, Mr. McKenzie, for having been with us today. I think this program is going to mean a great deal in the United States. I think it will clarify much thinking. It will bring a great many people new ideas that, perhaps, they should've known and talked about for a long time, and that even if they suspected them, they shoved them aside. Au revoir.

[Theme music begins 57:40]

[Credit sequence overlaid on motion picture images of London]

[Unknown Announcer:] [speaking while names appear on credit sequence] Mrs. Roosevelt's guests were the Right Honorable Hugh Gaitskell, socialist member of Parliament and leader of the Opposition; Lord Russell, internationally known philosopher and mathematician and Nobel Prize winner; Lord Boothby, independent member of the House of Lords; and Robert McKenzie, teacher at the London School of Economics.

[National Educational Television logo]

[Unknown Announcer:] This is National Educational Television.

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