

EDITORIAL

Pulling Together

The West has three broad options in responding to Soviet pressure and its military build-up. It can do nothing, hoping to be left in peace; it can respond solely in the military field; or the West can approach the problem through a broad and flexible strategy which embraces all aspects of political confrontation—military, diplomatic, psychological, economic, trade and cultural.

The first option is always attractive to those who prefer not to face facts and is encouraged by those who do not want us to recognize Soviet policy for what it is. It would in practice open the door to the Sovietization of the West, depriving us of control over our own destinies. Flora Lewis, reporting Polish peoples' reactions to Western attendance of a Pugwash conference in Warsaw, tells how a shabbily dressed worker pointed to riot police and their exploding gas canisters and warned: "The West is stupid. This will come to you, the way you're going."¹

A purely military response would have to overcome the handicap of mobilizing democratic societies in economic distress against an opponent who cares neither about consumer and welfare demands nor about domestic public opinion. The Soviets capitalize on this Western difficulty: indeed their military strength is their only claim to superpower status. The West *does* need to improve its military preparedness, particularly its conventional forces in Europe and its worldwide response capability, but it would be foolish to restrict its strategy to the one area where Soviet strength is greatest.

In March of last year the Centre for Conflict Studies hosted a Workshop to examine low-intensity methods of resisting the Soviet threat; in effect, the third option. Conclusions pointed to a need for the West to move in this direction, thus minimizing war risks by directing conflict into less dangerous forms, and permitting the Alliance to develop a positive rather than a reactive strategy.² Events since then have underlined the need for a well coordinated long-term policy acceptable to most Western nations.

It is therefore distressing to see this third option grasped by the United States, only to be in shreds a few months later. The debate over the Soviet natural gas pipeline to West Europe is well reported elsewhere.³ Sufficient to say that the US position is correct in theory and the European view is right in practice. This is because, having blessed the project at its inception, it was too late for America to cry halt when the contracts had been signed and much work completed. To be sure, Soviet behaviour since 1979 justifies a sharply revised Western approach to East-West trade. But this new approach has to be agreed by major Alliance partners in advance of implementation, and it must not be seriously damaging to Western interests. United States leadership, which is sorely needed, has not been enhanced by crude attempts to apply extra-territorial

jurisdiction, by an apparent greater willingness to restrict European trade than United States, and by a failure to perceive that in this form of East-West conflict, willing cooperation amongst allies is essential to success. Moreover, in long overdue efforts to broadcast true facts to Cubans, the US Administration is drawing fire from many quarters,⁴ the upgrading of its international broadcasting capabilities has lagged,⁵ and there is no broad domestic understanding, far less consensus, behind the move to carry East-West competition into new fields. At home and abroad, the American Government needs a roving ambassador of great moral stature and persuasive power, to explain that, if we are to avoid choosing between defeat and nuclear war, we have to recognize and accept new duties.

Throughout much of the second world war, the Western Allies argued and bickered over strategy and its implementation. That they eventually pulled together, subordinating their differences for the greater cause, was mainly to the credit of the Supreme Commander. Where is today's Dwight D. Eisenhower?

Footnotes

1. Flora Lewis, "A Blow to Peace: the Meekness of Pugwash," in *The Globe and Mail*, 9 September 1982, p. 7.
2. *Low Intensity Conflict and the Integrity of the Soviet Bloc* (Fredericton, Centre for Conflict Studies, 1981).
3. *New York Times*, 4, 19 January, 7 April, 20, 27 July, 12, 26, 31 August, 1 September 1982; *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 February, 8 September 1982; *National Review*, 21 August 1981; *Globe and Mail*, 26 September 1981, 26 February, 7 July, 9 August, 2, 4 September 1982; *Wall Street Journal*, 26 April, 14 July, 3, 4 August, 1 September 1982; *Forbes*, 7 June 1982; *Financial Times*, 22, 25 June 1982; *Tass* in English, 1127GMT 25 June 1982; *The Economist*, 25 July 1981, 26 June, 10, 17, 31 July, 14, 28 August, 4 September 1982; *London Times*, 6 July 1982; *SAIS Review*, Summer 1982; *Time*, 7 December 1981, 6, 12, 19 July, 2, 9, August, 6, 13 September 1982; *Washington Post*, 9 January, 3, 10, 12 March, 24 June, 14, 28, 31 July 1982; *Baltimore Sun*, 3 March 1982; *Boston Globe*, 4 March 1982; *Los Angeles Times*, 24 August 1982; *Washington Times*, 27 July, 19 August 1982; *Observer*, 25 July, 1, 8 August 1982; *Guardian*, 29 August, 5 September 1982; *Newsweek*, 2 August, 6 September 1982.
4. *U.S. News and World Report*, 13 September 1982, p. 13; *Washington Times*, 20 August 1982, p. 20; *Chicago Tribune*, 20 August 1982; *Washington Post*, 18, 19, 20 August 1982.
5. *Washington Post*, 24 March, 20 July 1982; *Globe and Mail*, 16 March 1982; *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 1982, pp. 23-30; *National Review*, 30 April 1982, pp. 477-486.