Limited World War?
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Limited World War?
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This monograph begins with a comparison between the international situation as it is in 1984 and as it was just before World War I broke out. It perceives the biggest threats to world peace as lying within what is identified as Near East Major: a broad arc of territories extending from Greece through to India. It expresses an apprehension of the two superpowers becoming involved in far-flung though non-nuclear confrontation and conflict; and relates this to what the author sees as an unbreakable deadlock between Washington and Moscow in respect of strategic nuclear deterrence. The study also urges the West to evolve a new Grand Strategy, one that would pay more attention to the promotion of economic stability and of democratic values.
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Neville Brown

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I

THE SARAJEVO SYNDROME

In so far as 'the Spirit of the Age' can ever be encapsulated, it does seem that, around the middle 1960s, the outlook of the West's intelligentsia turned towards pessimism. To an extent, this found expression in apprehension or even resignation about the prospect of a sudden global catastrophe: a kind of nuclear 1914 rather than, to draw the obvious contrast, the interminable agony of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. None the less, one indicator of the prevailing mood was an upsurge of interest in Orwell. The years 1955 to 1964 witnessed the publication of a few commentaries on him of book-length. But the next ten were to see a spate.

In no small measure, the swing here identified was to reflect and, of course, accentuate mounting apprehension throughout society about a visible decrease in the ability of governments to resolve or even contain social and political tensions. Thus, in 1964, the USA had faced a lot of unrest in the black ghettos of its Northern cities as well as some on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. Subsequently, militant protest, articulated by television and fuelled by Vietnam, was to erupt (especially during 1968) in Birmingham, Madrid, Sydney, Warsaw and countless other town centres and campuses. Indeed, this turbulence even extended across the Chinese People's Republic, albeit as the manipulated mockery of itself known as the Cultural Revolution.

While it lasted, this upsurge looked far more threatening than previous campaigns of protest against German rearmament, nuclear deterrence, the Algerian war, etc. This was because (a) it was global in extent and in its interactions and (b) it had large social and cultural dimensions.

Yet what must be remarked is the rate at which this ramified revolt was to subside through 1970. A major factor - certainly in Britain - was the repeated failure of the leadership thereof to pass the most elementary tests of
dependability. Another was that the universities of the West had met most of the reasonable demands for internal reform, along with not a few of the unreasonable ones.

However, broader changes were also under way. Slowly, Washington was resigning itself to the abandonment of Saigon, and was developing the while a reassuring dialogue with Moscow. Duly, there was a disposition (not least on the Left) to view such relaxation of West-East tension as less ambiguous and more profound than ever it could have been; and to view similarly sundry signs of economic advance, notably the 'Green Revolution' in the agriculture of the poorer lands. One would have to say, indeed, that the public mood in most Western countries became inexcusably euphoric. In addition, while the outlook of the political intelligentsia did tend to remain pessimistic, this pessimism assumed a more conservative mien.

But no sooner was this new mood established than it started to wane. The 'Green Revolution' rarely proved to be the unqualified boon some had anticipated. It was, in any case, soon to be cramped and overshadowed by the energy crisis brought so dramatically to a head by the Arab-Israel war of 1973. Meanwhile, the absence of substantive progress on arms control caused further concern. Yet another source of renewed disillusionment and anxiety was the utter failure of the Soviet bloc properly to implement the non-territorial aspects of the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Then, around the turn of the decade, some serious local crises were to break with a disconcerting suddenness, notably in Afghanistan, Grenada, Iran, Nicaragua and Poland. With each case in turn, a feeling was soon abroad that the upset in question could have been avoided, given a modicum of understanding and foresight on the part of the authorities concerned. Yet there was also a sense that each was, in the final analysis, a specific manifestation of a continual rise in global stress.

Accordingly, various commentators drew analogies with 1914, either overtly or by direct implication. One German commentator wistfully emphasised the instabilities inherent in a technology-driven arms race. Shades of the naval arms race between Germany and Britain that was triggered off by the former's Navy Laws of 1897 and 1900; and, of
course, of the rather less febrile and essentially multilateral competitions then taking place between the armies of the continental land powers.

Another ominous precedent readily recalled in Germany concerns the lapses in dialogue and perception which occurred during that fateful summer of 70 years ago. Such recollection helps explain why the Schmidt government in Bonn was so anxious to preserve its links with Moscow in the wake of Afghanistan.

Next, there is generalised stress as a background factor common to then and now. It has been said of 1914 that 'the little Eurasian peninsula that was Europe, which had conquered the world and was its power-house, contained too much energy and power for the narrowness of its confines. The very process of imperial activity had simultaneously furnished occasion for clashes and crises, and served the function of safety valve for the overflowing energy of Europe. There was, in 1914, no more room in the world for fresh conquests.'

Certainly, an awareness that, in literal geographical terms, frontiers were closing on all sides became acute in the last 20 years before then. For so many facts could speak for themselves. In 1909, Robert Peary became the first to reach the North Pole as, in 1911, did Roald Amundsen the South. In 1906, Amundsen had conquered the North-West Passage from Arctic Canada to the Pacific. In 1890, the 'moving frontier' of the Old West had ceased to figure in the US Federal Census. By 1875, the exploration of Australia's arid Western plateau was essentially a matter of 'mopping up' various undiscovered tracts. So the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 set the seal on the continent's being well and truly spanned.

Likewise, the European political impact on Africa moved from being peripheral to comprehensive between 1881 and 1911. Similarly, in inner Asia, a British military expedition reached Lhasa in 1904, the upshot being that in 1912 Tibet as a whole became autonomous within China but under British protection. Worth a mention, too, are Sir Aurel Stein's expeditions deep into Central Asia between 1900 and 1914: expeditions that were partly conducted for purposes geopolitical, even though they well exposed to European scholarly enquiry the very roots of Oriental civilisation.
Obviously, the effective completion of Europe's discovery of this planet is a phase in history that cannot be repeated, now or ever. Yet no less singular has been the development in the contemporary world of a new sensitivity to the situation of 'Spaceship Earth' within the wider Cosmos. Arguably, indeed, our forays into near Space, tentative and poorly coordinated though they have thus far been, have contributed to a cultural departure Zbigniew Brzezinski observed a decade ago, the development among the young of a 'planetary' perception of world reality in contrast to the traditional 'international' one (See also Chapter 5).\(^5\)

Of more central importance, however, has been the development of global communications, meaning both the transmission of attitudes and information and the physical passage of people and goods. Naturally, the former stimulates the latter and is, in its turn, furthered by it. Needless to say, too, the various attitudinal changes observed in this Chapter will always be driven largely by this dual advance.

In the decades which led up to 1914, a revolution was occurring in all forms of communication that, by previous standards, seemed epic. The size of the world's merchant fleets rose from 20 million net tons in 1880 to 35 million in 1910.\(^6\) Then again, the global network of the cable links was effectively completed with the laying, from 1902, of the bifurcating line from British Columbia to Queensland and to New Zealand. Finally, a pointer to the future was afforded by Marconi's wireless transmission from Cornwall to Newfoundland in 1901.

What the implications of such a revolution may usually be for political stability and general peace will be further considered below. Either way, it has to be said that the one just outlined is really quite modest by comparison to that in progress now. Take, in particular, civil aviation: a mode of transport that was not to advent on a regular basis until after the First World War. In 1978, Boeing published a 'best-guess world forecast' (meaning a forecast appertaining to the full membership of the International Civil Aviation Organisation) for the period up to 1991. The median expectation of the traffic volume for that year was 1835 billion passenger-kilometres, as against 794 in 1978 and
a mere 75 in 1960. It was in 1960, in fact, that air passenger traffic across the North Atlantic trunk routes came to exceed that by sea.

Meanwhile, the explosion in data transmission is well evidenced in a US-Japanese view of how communications satellites are being brought ever more extensively into play:

In 1965 less than 100 trans-Atlantic satellite telephone circuits were in use; in 1980 there were 20,000, connecting all parts of the globe. The number of circuits is expected to double by 1984 and to reach 130,000 by 1993. This tremendous growth has been fuelled by an equally phenomenal fall in the price. Leasing a standard telephone circuit for a year cost $32,000 in 1969 but only costs $4,680 now. Worldwide, the satellite communications business pulls in nearly two billion dollars a year and is expected to reach ten billion a year by 1990.

What is more, the resultant feeling that the world is shrinking in terms of intercommunications is paralleled by one that it is decidedly finite in regard to its resource base. Still, those who analyse these matters polarise in two respects. There are those who place great store by mathematical extrapolations and those who do not. Then there are those who are essentially optimistic versus those who are fundamentally pessimistic.

The fact that these dichotomies by no means coincide is a clear enough indication that the debate about the ultimate possibilities will not be swiftly resolved. But the least that must be said is that anxiety about the future availability of energy and other resources will have a salient place in the perspectives of Man for decades to come. What has also to be said is that concern about the erosion of the natural environment has been mounting and is bound so to continue.

Conversely, there was little such talk before 1914. What is more, one of the very few expressions of a Malthusian concern with the pressure of rising demand on resources looks in retrospect like a classic example of a self-defeating prophecy. In 1898, Sir William Crookes (an eminent British chemist and physicist) startled the world of
science by warning that Mankind could not much longer replenish the nitrogen its crops took from the soil, given the then current rate of depletion of the sodium nitrate deposits in the Andean zone of Latin America. However, the Haber-Bosch process, perfected in Germany in 1913, made possible the commercial production of ammonia from nitrogen with hydrogen. Soon, this technique enabled the Kaiser's regime to circumvent nitrogen starvation in the face of naval blockade. Afterwards, it went on to become the world's chief source of nitrogen fertiliser.

Closely related to the Malthusian question is that of just how efficient may be the continual adjustment between output and consumption within the world economy. A tendency for the effective demand for goods and services to sag recurrently and more or less cyclically was well-established before 1914 and resumed in 1920. After 1945, both this 'trade cycle' and the collateral problem of structural (i.e. long-term) unemployment was curbed considerably by Keynesian economic strategies. Since about 1965, however, these strategies have seemed less effective or even relevant. Now structural unemployment, in particular, looms as a far more serious problem than either it or the trade cycle was, for the advanced nations at any rate, in the decades immediately before the First World War.

Linked with it is, of course, the deepening crisis over the financing of international trade. Here the contrast between yesterday and today is stark, especially the drastic reduction in the role of gold as a backing for national currencies and hence international trade. By 1900, the big silver lobby of the Western states had been defeated in the context of US domestic politics. So from then through 1914, every country of any weight in world commerce (only China excepted) was firmly committed to gold and gold alone as the basis of its currency.

Accordingly, comparatively small adjustments in credit policy and small transfers in the ownership of gold were usually sufficient to keep international exchange rates and price levels in close conformity with each other. The forward planning of international trade and investment could therefore be undertaken with confidence.
Admittedly, this reliance on gold could have deflationary connotations as and when world production of this metal was less buoyant than general economic progress. But in the period prior to 1914, the opposite effect is evident. This is because of the discovery, in 1886, of the massive gold deposits of the Witwatersrand.

Today, the regimen of 'managed float' exchange rates (introduced in the early 'seventies) has led to less stability between now paper-based national currencies than many analysts had hoped. Interacting with this is a set of additional problems, prominent among which is the failure adequately to promote (as an international currency free from the vagaries of the dollar, the pound sterling or, indeed, gold) the Special Drawing Rights launched by the IMF in the immediate aftermath of the 1968 gold crisis. Another problem has been a general tendency, between 1965 and 1980, for national price levels to rise more and more persistently, a tendency that could redevelop all too easily. A third is the high volume of international indebtedness: 700 billion dollars as of the end of 1982.

At first sight, this last aspect may not look too serious. For whatever else it may or may not do, inflation does progressively reduce the real level of debts already incurred. Besides, the world of 1914 knew considerable international obligations in the form of foreign investments when valued at close to 10 billion pounds.11

Inevitably, however, things are less simple than that. To an uncomfortable extent, the new indebtedness is due to the high cost of imported energy rather than to transfers of productive capital. Also, 300 billions of the total is owed by Latin America and a further 80 by the Soviet bloc: two regions of considerable moment in the geostrategic order (see again Chapter 5).

What is more, the political hazards inherent in all forms of economic stress have been accentuated by the pace at which material expectations have risen. Granted, in certain of the advanced industrial democracies, the difficulties lately experienced in sustaining economic growth are at last making people less concerned about it. But over much of the less developed world, materialistic hedonism continues to gain ground as more traditional value-systems are progressively undermined by economic, social and ecological change. Likewise, the whole world has seen
increased pressure for greater individual and social fulfillment, especially from ethnic minorities, youth and women. Evident, too, is a tendency for this pressure to develop on a trans-national basis.

Even when such aspirations are not directly economic, they usually have economic connotations. Ironically, however, these are sometimes inimical to economic growth. One such effect can be the way worldwide inflation has been encouraged by (a) its having become harder for all but the most closed societies to achieve a sufficiently high degree of consensus on a national incomes policy and (b) governments feeling obliged hastily to generate more money in response to sudden bottlenecks in the supply of oil or other key commodities, because their electorates expect them to cope with sectoral price rises without curtailing the effective demand for other things. A lack of incomes restraint and too free a money supply combine to aggravate inflation. Yet that, in its turn, chokes growth by discouraging investment and disturbing external trade.

Accordingly, many regimes have found it ever less easy to sustain an economic performance that matches even the minimum material expectations of the populations they rule. Correspondingly, they have found it ever harder to respond to the aspirations of the latter in regard to life style in general and political participation in particular.

Manifestly, this contradiction is sharper today than it was in the pre-1914 era when, after all, the forces of traditionalism were more firmly entrenched. Granted, the degree of such entrenchment can never be defined, let alone measured. Nevertheless, a quite relevant indicator is the extent to which populations are still rural rather than urban. In 1900, well over 90 per cent of the world's population were living in essentially rural surroundings. Today, barely a half are. Nor is the countryside anywhere as remote as it was.

However, a closer parallel between the two eras can be drawn in the sphere of artistic and intellectual endeavour. After 1900, this branch of human activity ramified, much as it was to from 1955 or thereabouts. Within this diversity, each time round, are countless expressions of a fascination with (and, not infrequently, the outright celebration of) violence in thought and deed. Before 1914, these embraced such themes as Nietzsche, 'Social Darwinism' and Futurism.
In recent years, there has been something of a preoccupation with the more egotistical and less licit forms of physical violence.

Still more regrettably, this preoccupation correlates with a broader and more tangible phenomenon: a global crime wave. Not that the evidence for this manifestation of diminishing moral restraint is at all easy to marshal systematically. As I have noted elsewhere,

Crime statistics remain notoriously unreliable for many territories, and for many others—notably those of the Communist world—are not released at all. Nor could the definitions of crime ever be standardised universally.\(^\text{13}\)

Not that, in any case, this escalation has everywhere been continuous. Almost certainly, for instance, the Communist accession to power in China in 1949 led to a big drop there in all the more obvious forms of crime. Then again, the crime rate in neighbouring Japan halved between 1948 and 1973. Between mid-1981 and mid-1983, the recorded crime rate dropped 8 per cent in the USA; and the murder rate, in particular, 19 per cent.\(^\text{14}\) All the same, it is entirely fair to say that this thermonuclear era in which we live has experienced an accelerating rise in crime (not least violent crime) more or less world-wide. It is hard to believe that so extensive a groundswell of negative behaviour augurs well for peace between nations.

A comparable escalation appears not to have taken place prior to the catastrophe of 1914. Thus, as Leon Radzinowicz has pointed out,

Around the turn of the century, though there was dispute about whether crime was lessening in quantity, there was at least a general belief that it would become milder in quality.\(^\text{15}\)

What that previous age did experience, however, was an emergent Afro-Asian backlash against European imperialism, a backlash that sometimes found local expression in armed resistance. It stemmed in part from the absorption by indigenous peoples of Western notions of nationalism and self-determination. But in those days it often owed more to a last desperate reaffirmation of a pre-European way of life.\(^\text{16}\) Among the movements in which the latter theme seems uppermost are the Mahdist state in the Sudan to
1898; the central Asian reaction to Russian rule that was finally to explode into insurrection in 1916; and the Boxer Rising in north-east China, 1899-1900.

Today, this backlash has become a decidedly subsidiary theme in the essentially agnostic civilisations of East Asia. For the time being, at any rate, Japan is endorsing the canons of modern Western society with more fervour and, indeed, success than is the West itself. Much the same is true of Hong Kong, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan and incipiently even China. Meanwhile, in India the Gandhian attempt to redefine and hence consolidate traditional Hinduism is waning in the face of other influences and on account of its own contradictions:

The spinning-wheel found its place on the national flag but not in the peasants' cottages.17

But in an Islamic cultural zone extending from Malaysia to West Africa such a reaction has come to appear more insistent these last 20 years or so: a manifestation, if you like, of 'future shock' and the 'politics of envy'. Both the Arabs' shattering defeat by Israel in the 1967 war and also their relative recovery in that of 1973 have helped reinforce this trend. Perhaps, too, it has gained appreciable added impetus from the way Israel's Likud government is consolidating the occupation, in 1967, of territories occupied by over a million Arabs. Certainly, the Lebanon War of 1982 has also had some effect.

Before 1914, there was little or no relationship between Islamic revivalism and the Jewish question. Within Europe itself, however, there was a close correlation between anti-Semitism and anti-progressive sentiment. For instance, the pogroms in Czarist Russia (especially widespread in 1881-82 and again in 1903-05) owed a lot to a xenophobic reaction against imported modernism. And broadly similar attitudes within Western Europe obviously provide the background for such episodes as the affaire Dreyfus.

Today, the Jewish situation, in the West at any rate, is a lot less precarious, if by that is meant the chance of survival in the face of menacing prejudice. Yet in two respects, it is more precarious. One relates to the particular crisis of national identity faced by Israel in the light of the consolidation just referred to. The other is that the revolution in communications is generating a broader crisis
of cultural identity for the Jewish people, as it is for all other ethnic and religious minorities, throughout the West and further afield. Undoubtedly, the current ascendancy of Likud within Israeli politics is partly a backlash against this, though it stems more directly from the physical insecurity felt by Israel in the face of encompassing Arab armies and of repeated acts of terrorism by the fascisto-Marxist hard core of the PLO.

More generally, the politics of extreme envy and aggravated future shock has accentuated the threat of terrorism. Not that this phenomenon was unknown before the First World War. On the contrary, the more militant wing of the narodniki (a Russian communitarian sect) finally added Czar Alexander II to its list of murder victims in 1881. Then in the USA, in 1901, President McKinley was to be fatally wounded by a young American anarchist. Nor, of course, can one forget the assassination at Sarajevo of the heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, together with his wife. The actual assailant was a Serbian nationalist fanatic of Bosnian extraction. Sarajevo was and is not only the official capital of Bosnia but a major centre of religion - above all, Islam.

Even so, the exposure of open societies to mass insurgency or individual terrorism coordinated on perhaps a global plane is much greater today than was the case then. This in itself is reason enough why the turbulence of Afro-Asia has now to be a much bigger and more central theme in global strategy.

Other comparisons with what proved to be the run-up to a world war in 1914 could be drawn. Then as now, for example, Ireland was vexing Britain as was Nicaragua the United States. Still, enough has surely been said to warrant the following conclusion: Just about every social and economic cause of international tension today was either virtually non-existent before 1914 or else was less in evidence then. Even in this previous era, however, the combination of such factors loomed large enough. Indeed, one British historian (himself a man of sceptically conservative political persuasion) has been driven to this view of the origins of World War One:
A major part in the initial processes which led to the unleashing of the armed forces was played by a kind of desperate and irrational conservatism seizing what it felt to be its only chance of avoiding social or political revolution.18

Yet it is hard to escape the conclusion that this effect could be even more pronounced today. Surely this is seen to be so when due account is taken of the 'conservatism' of various relatively new countries or regimes: stuck all too prematurely in moulds that are far too rigid, ideologically as well as institutionally. If so, heavy loads of responsibility may repeatedly be placed on those who contribute to the arts of diplomacy and crisis management. How confident can we be that they can cope?

Alas, not every sign is reassuring. Far more thought and information circulates about international problems than ever before. As a rule, too, a higher proportion of this is concerned with underlying causes as opposed to transient matters. Even so, the obstacles to the actual decision-takers digesting and evaluating the full range of data are much the same as ever they were. Nor do those involved even find it psychologically easy to wrestle with more than one major problem at a time. Likewise, they find it hard to take due account of the interdependence between problems in different spheres of human activity in different parts of the modern world.

Herein can perhaps be seen one strong argument for seeking the formulation of a Grand Strategy, one derivative from a social and political philosophy that articulates, in the context of a manifold world crisis, the established liberal values. Like the protagonists of 1914, we are not at all sure about our ultimate goals. Arguably, however, our ruling elites, our electorates and, indeed, our intelligentsia need surety on this score even more than was the case in a situation of full-scale war and in an age less complicated in almost all respects.

As the 'communications explosion' gathers pace everywhere, all governments will face an ever-starker choice between becoming more open and devolved or else more centralised and repressive. So perhaps the time is more than ripe for the more forceful advocacy of the extension of liberal democracy, this through the needful trans-
formation of the police-states of both Left and Right. For the issues thus posed are of profound consequence, ethically as well as pragmatically. The most important question that can be asked about a country's politics is whether two people can hold a conversation without either having to wonder whether the other is in the secret police.

At a more esoteric or perhaps a more mundane level, certain changes of what can loosely be termed in philosophical kind are in train in the management of international affairs. Thus there is widespread acceptance of the proposition that Defence and Arms Control are obverse sides of the same coin. There is also a growing understanding of 'action-reaction', the phenomenon whereby hawkishness on one side sustains hawkishness on the other and likewise with doveishness. In the particular case of the Soviet Union, the hawks seem heavily concentrated in the KGB and the military, the doves more in the Foreign Office and the Academy of Sciences. At one time at least, Pravda was more of a mouthpiece for the former and Izvestia for the latter.

Above all, however, several features of the global arms balance are so utterly novel as still to demand a whole corpus of fresh thought along such lines. The most obvious and shocking of these novelties is, of course, the nuclear transformation. Firepower used to be so scarce a resource that the supreme test of generalship lay in conserving it for application at the crucial time and place. Now it has become so abundant that men fear to use it save in the tiniest fractions.

Another aspect, certainly in relation to Europe in 1914, is that this ultimate form of explosive firepower is very largely in the hands of just two states, the USA and the USSR. To find tolerably appropriate analogies in European history, one would have to refer to Britain and France in the early eighteenth century or maybe to Athens and Sparta.

Each of today's Superpowers dominates a hemisphere. But as with the other near-duopolies just cited, the specifics of their geographical setting have induced the one to be considerably maritime and the other heavily land-based. The nodality of the USSR's North Eurasia location gives it a potential for military leverage virtually all round a circum-
ferential zone from Finnmark through Iran and Afghanistan to Manchuria. At the same time, however, it constrains its power-projection to more distant places.

Coupled with the realities of nuclear overkill, this asymmetry could almost be said to invite what could amount to the penultimate horror: Limited World War. By this is meant a pattern of conflict in which one of the Superpowers (most probably the USSR) elects to retaliate forcibly in some other theatre against a local initiative by its adversary which it refuses to countenance yet is unable to respond to on the spot.

But whether this ugly logic is ever borne out in practice must depend on other factors, some of the more fundamental of which will be further considered later. Among them are the stability or otherwise of the balance of nuclear overkill between Washington and Moscow; the inner drives behind their external policies; and the world situation overall. Suffice for the moment to note yet another partial analogy with 1914.

Then and now, the world order was or is considerably imperilled by one of the leading states therein being profoundly multicommunal in character. For this presents a contradiction so basic as to be liable to goad the polity concerned to external belligerency. This is because, after a certain stage, the processes of modernisation ineluctably generate ever more insistent demands for the liberalisation of government and other aspects of life. The rub is that such pressure tends to differentiate along communal lines, thereby translating into support for communal autonomy. Therefore, modernisation against a background of communal pluralism may force an exceptionally stark choice between an increase in repression and the acceptance of creeping disintegration.

The unstable multicommunal empire of 1914 was Austria-Hungary. But she was only the fifth military power in Europe, using the criterion of the combined army and navy budgets. Her counterpart today is the Soviet Superpower. Moreover, the latter's repeated interference with the internal affairs of other countries in Eastern Europe has to be seen as an application of the 'domino theory'. Should the spirit of liberalism progress in Poland, say, it might then flourish overmuch in the Baltic States, the Ukraine and other Soviet territories within which
non-Russian communities are numerically dominant. For Poland read anywhere within what has come reluctantly to be accepted as the USSR's zone of direct control: the sphere first delineated, through Cold War haggling and coercion, between 1944 and 1949.

II

THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

But if there is no new moral to be drawn from Poland, what of the full-scale invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979? Surely, something is to be learned from Moscow's most blatant challenge to the world order since it encouraged or condoned the invasion of South Korea. Not least may there be fresh clues about the fateful interaction between internal and external policy.

In looking for a reason or mix of reasons for this singular incursion, it may not be too flippant to draw the distinction which theologians classically make between ultimate causes and proximate ones. If so, the evident proximate cause was the desperate situation of the Marxist regime that had so brutally seized power in Kabul in the spring of 1978. For a trite form of 'economism' had led it into a bad miscalculation of the reception by the very conservative Afghan masses of its land reform programme. Much the same applied, too, to the attempted abolition of bride price; the stipulation of a minimum age for marriage; the extension of female education; and the use of schools for political-cum-atheistical indoctrination. So what with a consequent burgeoning of armed resistance and its own internal factionalism, it was all too apparent that the regime stood no chance unaided of avoiding a total collapse, unless this be through the abandonment of virtually all its ideology.

Yet already the USSR was deeply involved in this situation. Arms imports from that quarter had increased markedly since the spring. For some time. Soviet commando units had been engaged in active operations against insurgent bands. Over and beyond this, Soviet military
advisers (often speakers of Persian dialects, hailing from central Asia) had been assigned even to units as small as companies within the Afghan armed forces.

Still, sorry though this state of affairs was, it is not in itself sufficient to explain a massive incursion by the Soviet Union into a territory outside her recognised zone of direct control. Indeed, even within the limits thus established, the exercise of armed force has never been undertaken lightly. Hungary in 1956, connivance in the Berlin wall in 1961, and Czechoslovakia in 1968 were all moves made only, it seems, after a prolonged evaluation of the broader connotations. Much the same attitude has lately been evinced vis-à-vis the Polish crisis.

Besides, there have been numerous occasions - both before and since World War Two - on which Moscow has shown itself remarkably ready to terminate a strategic involvement should opportunistic expediency or the sheer force of circumstances so require. Among the cases in point are Germany in 1918, Poland in 1921, China in 1927, Spain in 1938, the whole of the 'Popular Front' with the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939, the Comintern in 1943, Azerbaijan and Manchuria in 1946, the aim of a united and Marxist Germany that same year, West Berlin in 1949, the Soviet zone of Austria (and sector of Vienna) in 1955, the Cuban missile deployment in 1962, the presence in Egypt in 1972, and that in Somalia in 1977. To which one might add that Communism in other countries (such as China, Yugoslavia and even, to some degree, Cuba) has likewise proved flexible in these geopolitical terms.

An important question, as one reviews the kaleidoscopic succession of Muscovite bouleversements, must be the extent to which Soviet policy in such matters may be influenced by the ideological dimension. Not that this motive is ever easy to isolate. For one thing, those political leaders who are the most committed to a wider revolutionary purpose are often the very ones who dare to display the most tactical pragmatism and strategic patience in their statecraft month by month.

Then again, Marxist-Leninist theory is so vacuous at the interstate level that those who subscribe to it can always rationalise any decision apropos of international policy. You can disown a revolution abroad on the grounds that the country in question is so underdeveloped that 'the
time is not ripe'. Contrariwise, you can affect to because a
country is so advanced as to be able to pursue an evolu-
tionary 'path to socialism'. If, on the other hand, you wish
to justify intervention, you simply switch the respective
arguments about.

All the same, an acid test of the Kremlin's ideological
resolve has to be whether it is prepared to assist or, at
the very least, approve the rise to power of Communist or
Marxist-Leninist movements in territories that lie beyond the
effective reach of Soviet military power. In other words,
how gladly will it accept the emergence of Communist
polities over which it cannot hope to exercise physical
control? While Josef Stalin ruled, the operative answer was
that there could be no such acceptance, never mind the
outward protestations. Thus from 1923, the Communist
Party of China was to be proffered worthwhile support only
so long as it was able to function through a Kuomintang
that, in its turn, was being shaped and monitored by
Soviet political and military missions. Likewise, in the
following decade, Moscow's support of the Party in Spain
was but part and parcel of a deep military as well as
political involvement with the Popular Front regime in
Madrid.

Similarly, in the summer of 1946, Stalin sought to
discourage the Communists in China and also in Greece from
fresh recourse to forceful struggle, the common factor
being the absence of a Soviet military presence. Soon, the
goodly measure of national autonomy being achieved by his
erstwhile colleague in the Comintern, Josef Tito of Yugo-
slavia, was to arouse in him envy of the most bitter kind.
Nor, indeed, did Stalin ever give any indication that he
was able to view the external world through ideological
spectacles as opposed to statist ones, a qualified exception
putatively being that, between 1943 and 1946, he did
perceive Germany as being a classically Marxian example of
monopoly capitalism in its death throes.

His jealous disposition apart, the geopolitical pre-
occupations of Stalin stemmed from the instability of a
Bolshevik polity recurrently savaged by armed violence from
within or without and perennially plagued by mass alienation
over the collectivisation of agriculture, religion, peripheral
autonomy and, in fact, a whole gamut of interrelated
issues. Subsequently, however, the Kremlin spent virtually
a decade under the sway of Nikita Khruschev, a homespun visionary suffused with an optimism that paralleled remarkably the sanguine mood so evident in the West during his years of dominance (1955-64). No other leader the USSR has known could ever have told farmers in a thriving US Corn Belt that their 'grandchildren would live under socialism'. Arguably, too, none would have embraced so wholeheartedly the revolution Fidel Castro had made independently in Cuba.

Yet the Khruschev era can be seen in retrospect as little more than a transitional phase between Stalin's insecurity due to national backwardness and war and Brezhnev's due to imbalanced national development. Still, there has been at least one ideological legacy of those sunnier years. It is the concept of 'national democracy' or the 'national democratic revolution'. What this was designed to do was take account of the gathering pace of Western 'disimperialism' and maybe, too, of the developing tensions between Moscow and Peking. Correspondingly, it served as a useful rationale for an expansive opportunism in the foreign policy of the USSR and her East European allies.

The first authorised rendering of the said notion came in December 1960 in the 'Statement of the Conference of 81 Communist and Workers' Parties'. For this defined an 'independent national democracy' as one which continually fights against economic neo-colonialism as well as against such more formalised manifestations of 'imperialism' as 'military blocs and military bases on its territory'. In addition, it 'rejects dictatorial and despotic forms of government', though what this really means is giving free rein to the Marxist Left. No indication is ever given as to the sort of time frame during which such a 'national democracy' may be expected to metamorphose into an order of things more thoroughly socialistic: a 'people's democracy' akin to those of Eastern Europe and Cuba.

But imprecision in this and other respects has allowed the term to be applied, as may suit the geostrategic convenience of the Kremlin, to political and social orders that may be more than a little diverse in terms of their stage and pattern of development. Among those deemed to qualify at present are Angola, Burma, Syria, Tanzania and, of course, Afghanistan. Evidently then, the very fact that the theory of the national democratic revolution is too
vacuous to be subject to definitive analysis makes it all the more flexible as a political weapon against what the West views as stability.

By much the same token, however, it may lure the Soviet Union into an overestimation of the revolutionary possibilities, in Marxist-Leninist terms, in specific situations. In Afghanistan, after all, she was initially far too sanguine about the prospects for an expansion of her military mission tilting the local balance of advantage in a desired direction. Indeed, even the force she committed from December 1979 was still not big enough to garrison properly the further borders as well as the most nodal towns. And why 'did the world's most experienced press-muzzlers make the mistake of letting in Western correspondents to witness the take-over, only to have to push them out again'? No doubt, too, the Kremlin set too much store by the rapport its troops from central Asia might establish with the local people.

Moreover, Moscow seemed to compound this complacency by facile talk about a full withdrawal of troops once 'outside aggression' against its proteges in Kabul had been repulsed. For there are undertones here of a doctrinal insistence that transformations in a developing society are stable when, and only when, in a Marxian direction. Manifestly, the true prospect has been throughout that, irrespective of other interventions, the Soviet expeditionary force will be unable much to reduce its strength in-country for a very long time to come. Quite possibly, active support of the Afghan rebels by their compatriots across the Pakistani border (aided and abetted, in some measure, by certain intelligence services) will gradually be more or less curbed. Nor has armed infiltration from Iran ever threatened to present a major challenge. But these considerations do not in themselves remotely guarantee the independent survival, as something that plausibly could be called a 'People's Democracy' or even a 'National Democracy', of the regime left behind. In short, that ideological justification for entry appears as a combination of the half-baked and the downright disingenuous.

On the other hand, the campaign that has ensued has given the Soviet armed forces a combination of defined role and operational experience of a kind they have badly lacked.
for thirty-nine years. Furthermore, two grounds exist for believing such a lack was being felt acutely around the time the decision to invade was being taken.

The first is the universal one that regimes which have been beefing up their military muscles are tempted to flex them a little. The other is that the generation sustained by its first-hand memories of the Great Patriotic War (1941-45) was beginning to phase out of the Soviet corridors of power.

Let us look, for example, at the career of Marshal Ivan Pavlovsikiy, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet land forces in 1979 and for thirteen years previously. This officer had played a most prominent part in successive crisis situations, starting with the build-up in the Far East from 1966 and then the invasion of Czecholslovakia. He was born in 1908 and joined the Red Army in 1931. During the Great Patriotic War, he progressed from being a regimental adjutant to being a divisional commander.

The aura that has thus far enveloped such veterans of the struggle against Fascism has been rendered all the more vivid by the trenchant historicist dogmas that permeate Soviet writing about contemporary military affairs. Many lessons - some more pertinent than others - are still gleaned from a perusal of those violent years, not least of the sudden blitzkrieg across Manchuria in August 1945. Meanwhile, not a few are being drawn from related campaigns involving Soviet units. Due note has been taken of the highly successful operations against the Japanese between 1937 and 1939. By 1980, too, increasing attention was being paid to the Soviet role in Spain in 1936-38.

At the same time, however, a drive was under way to glean vicarious experience from the recent big conflicts in South-East Asia and the Middle East and from such commentary in foreign journals as arose out of them. Thus it is not hard to discern in articles on helicopter assault and the like a strain of respectful envy apropos of the first-hand experience gained by the armed forces of the USA and her allies in Vietnam. Indeed, such envy may have encouraged emulation of the US global role. One American survey had been able to identify some 28 acts of coercive military diplomacy by the USSR between 1967 and 1976 alone: in nearly all cases the Soviet Navy being, in fact, the instrument employed.
Not that a military yearning for renewed purpose and current operational experience automatically means that the Soviet Union is destined to become ever more ready to resort to arms. For whether she does so or not is bound also to depend on the overall development of the Soviet polity, the credibility of Western deterrence, the subtlety of Western diplomacy, and general world circumstances. At all events, the notion of the 'national democratic revolution' will remain available as a rationale for military interference in the developing world much as it did in Afghanistan and for similar action, principally through the Cuban proxy, in Angola and Ethiopia; and very much, indeed, as the idea of a 'Socialist Commonwealth' was explicitly invoked to provide legitimacy of a sort for the invasion of Czechoslovakia though not, it seems, the rather more subtle coercion of Poland.

Meanwhile, there is another strand in Soviet military thought that has a bearing on the Afghan situation, a strand which - though rarely if ever made overt - can often be discerned as salient. This is that the visible proximity of good solid blocks of firepower may bear upon a warlike situation considerably, even when these blocks do not so much as threaten to fire any shots in anger. Soviet commentaries on nuclear deterrence regularly imply this perception. Accordingly, a large garrison in Afghanistan may be deemed to have a pivotal value apropos of neighbouring territories, even if it never encroaches on them.

Pivotal in regard to what within those territories, then? An answer that immediately suggests itself today is in regard to reserves of oil sufficiently massive to head off the Soviet version of the energy crisis. Yet only a matter of five or ten years ago, Western experts were debating whether the Soviet Union might not be very energy-rich in relation to her own needs and perhaps, indeed, to those of her East European allies. Thus Peter Odell, Professor of Energy Studies at the University of Rotterdam and a compulsive optimist on just about every aspect of the oil trade, was anticipating an extension of Soviet oil exports into 'many parts of the world over the next decade'. Furthermore, the promotion of a common energy policy had been made a central plank in Moscow's drive to intermesh the countries of the Soviet bloc so tightly as to inhibit defiance of the Moscow line on any world issue. So firm did this
plank appear, in fact, that the USSR was prepared to export energy to her East European allies on terms that were often highly disadvantageous to herself, economically-speaking. Hence it was that, in 1976, all those states bar one got at least 75 per cent of their oil from her.23 Errant Romania was studiously making a point of getting nil though, as it happens, it was to relax this self-denying ordinance in 1979.

By the autumn of 1979, however, evidence was being proffered by the CIA and by the Joint Economic Committee of Congress that the Soviet Union's oil boom had started, quite suddenly it seemed, to peak out. Her recorded production of petroleum had risen from 145 million tons a year in 1960 to 355 in 1970 and then to 545 in 1977. Yet then the rate of expansion slowed to barely five per cent24: a rate which, even on an exponential25 extrapolation, would not have taken annual output past the billion-ton mark before 1991.

Worse, the view was gaining ground that the figure would actually have slipped below 500 million tons by 1985. By that time, the West Siberian fields would be passing their peak, while already the European ones were approaching exhaustion. What is more, no major new discoveries of oil had been made since the early 1970s, never mind official Soviet acknowledgements that regular finds were essential to a sustained increase in output.

Nor did the other domestic inputs into the Soviet energy budget look at all promising. Thus nuclear power expansion was lagging badly; and even that of natural gas had thus far fallen considerably behind the targets laid down. Accordingly, the best projections available indicated 'that the Soviet bloc will lose its position as a net exporter of energy by 1985, and that the USSR itself will become a net importer of energy by 1990', gas sales notwithstanding.26

Proof enough of the suddenness and severity of the crisis can be found in Alexei Kosygin's intimating to his East European allies at the 1980 annual meeting of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or COMECON) that they would soon have to diversify the national sources of their energy imports as the Soviet rate of oil supply could not rise above 'the high level of 1980'. Only two years before, the same meeting had ostensibly
reached final agreement on a definitive 'long-range special purpose programme' to integrate all aspects of energy over the next ten to fifteen years.

Presumably, a burgeoning anxiety about fuel and power will make the Soviet Union more concerned to have more influence over the evolving situation in and around the Persian Gulf. But how far may a forward tendency thus induced coincide with deeper rooted aspirations of a geostrategic kind? Is there now or was there ever anything in the time-honoured contention that, rather like Berlin under Kaiser Wilhelm, Moscow seeks to escape from the confines that physical geography imposes on her. More specifically, does she, under Czars and Bolsheviks, perennially seek to break through to the 'warm water ports' of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf?

In its classic formulation, the thesis alluded to would have it that such a theme has repeatedly been dominant ever since Peter the Great. For he it was who seized the Black Sea fortress of Azov from the Turks in 1696 and then hastened to construct there a Black Sea naval squadron.

The fact of the matter is, however, that a synoptic review of Czar Peter's progress does not reveal a special preoccupation with the sector in question. For he it was, too, who annexed Kamchatka and the northern Kuriles in the Pacific Ocean basin. Furthermore, he remained so fired with the lure of a north-east passage to the Indies that 'he determined to solve the debated problem of whether Asia and America were joined together, and at long last, almost on his death-bed, he sent out Behring on the first of his Arctic expeditions to the straits that bear his name'.

What is more, this same monarch was the founder of St Petersburg on the Baltic, the city which was then to remain the capital of Russia almost continuously until 1918. Likewise, 1699 - the very year in which that Black Sea squadron first became operational - was spent by Czar Peter welding together a Baltic coalition against Sweden: a coalition that precipitated a Great Northern War which was to last over twenty years. So what we have here is far too restless and opportunistic a personality to lend himself to the pursuit of a single-sector strategy. And in so far as he even tried to persevere with one, the sector on which he focussed was Northern Europe.
By the same token, a review of the two hundred years or so left to Czarist Russia after Peter's death in 1725 will show a concern with 'warm water' to be at all insistent only if every Muscovite initiative in the entire arc from Turkestan to Hungary is treated as derivative from it. Evidently, however, to perceive things thus is to encompass in that presumptively grand design a diverse assortment of more particular motives. Among them were advance into central Asia because God was understood to abhor a vacuum; reforging the nexus with the Ukrainians that the Mongols and the Poles had sundered; and, later on, securing the export routes for Ukrainian grain. Even on this interpretation, however, the record has to be frequently interspersed by developments apropos of Western Europe or maybe the Pacific; and in 1907, indeed, Russia was to strike a compromise with the British in Persia in order to combine with them against Germany. So if there has been an underlying imperative in terms of geographical orientation, it is that Muscovy must gain acceptance as politically part of Europe's scene while fending off successive security threats from that fractious yet dynamic peninsula.

Essentially speaking, too, the same has been true of the Kremlin under the Communists, never mind a cross-grained and vacuous dialogue between Molotov and Ribbentrop in Berlin in November 1940 about the southward extension of the respective spheres of influence of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. In fact, if any qualification has to be added, it is one that underlines the prominence of Europe in the Kremlin's world view. For as the USSR moved into the novel sphere of strategic nuclear deterrence, her development and deployment of strategic offensive weapons bespoke a preoccupation with the European theatre that was nothing less than obsessive. Indeed, a prime cause of the extreme vulnerability of the Soviet strategic deterrent to a disarming blow by the Americans, around the time of the Cuban crisis of 1962 and for several years thereafter, was the priority that had been accorded the option of strategic nuclear strikes against European objectives, as evidenced in the installation within the western borders of the USSR (between 1961 and 1963) of no fewer than 700 medium-range and intermediate-range strategic missiles.28 The current deployment of SS-20s is, of course, in much the same vein.
Yet if all this be true, one must remark how this notion about warm-water ports has retained influence throughout the West. For have no doubt it has. Thus, early in 1979, Dr Harold Brown, then US Secretary of Defense, had spoken of 'the combination of traditional Russian interest in the area of the Persian Gulf and the growing costs of Soviet domestic energy supplies which, under deteriorating regional conditions, could propel the Soviet Union toward various forms of intervention in the Middle East - moves that would inevitably produce worldwide repercussions' (my emphasis). Likewise early in 1980, Andre Fontaine, a distinguished French commentator, was to remark that the USSR 'has always been aspiring to reach warm seas'.

Each of these observations was made within a commentary that was otherwise thoroughly measured and perspicacious. At times, however, the distortion of perspective has been greater and more consequential. For example, in February 1947 the British government suddenly declared itself no longer able to continue as chief backer of the Royalists in Greece in their civil war against Communist insurgents. Within days, President Truman went to Congress to obtain special US aid for Greece and also Turkey on the grounds that the security of the United States and the world as a whole was threatened by attempts to impose totalitarian regimes on free peoples through 'direct or indirect aggression'.

He had mentioned Turkey, too, because, from early 1945 until the summer of 1946, that country had been subject to a continual diplomatic offensive by Moscow, the declared aim of which was to revise or scrap the Montreux Convention of 1936 in order to secure Soviet participation in the defence and management of the Turkish Straits. So in spite of the discordance in timing, he linked the said offensive with the Communist insurrection that had resumed in Greece that same summer, presuming them to be the twin spearheads of a concerted Soviet drive to the warm waters of the Mediterranean. As suggested above, however, Stalin was utterly unenthusiastic about the Greek Communists' uprising of 1946 as, indeed, he had been about a previous one late in 1944. Tito in Yugoslavia and George Dimitrov in Bulgaria did give the rebels moral and material support. But that was quite another matter (see below).
From this basic misperception at the White House, some wider and weightier ones may at least partially have stemmed. Among them was a failure to understand that the return to favour in the Kremlin, in the spring of 1946, of Andrei Zhdanov had ushered in a phase of consolidation and retrenchment in Soviet geostrategy. Over the next several months, Azerbaijan, the western zones of Germany, Libya, Manchuria and China Proper were all written off as beyond the manageable Soviet orbit. Only South Korea and the western sectors of Berlin were seen as still contestable.31

Never mind that Zhdanov made repression within Eastern Europe and the USSR itself more thorough than ever. Nor that he supercharged the Soviet propaganda drive, at home and abroad, in a manner that was truly frenetic: 'Stalin, the greatest living philologist' and all that sort of thing. The internal fervour was the alter ego of external circumspection. For each stemmed from insecurity.

So signal a failure to understand how Moscow's Grand Strategy was being shaped by traditional considerations of state rather than by a genuine commitment to world revolution must have helped lay the foundations for the simplistic view of the Soviet threat that was to become so prevalent by the 1950s. By the same token, the extravagant image of international Communism as so monolithic that it could be manipulated with unerring precision by the Kremlin must have owed something to a failure to perceive what Tito and Dimitrov had been up to 1946. They had, in fact, been seeking to enlist the services of Greek (and, above all, Macedonian) Communism in an endeavour to create a South Slav federation able to stand on its own against Stalin as well as against the West. In other words, they were deliberately aiming for polycentrism within the context of the Soviet orbit. Within ten years or so, Wlaldyslaw Gomulka in Poland and Mao Tse-tung in China were to be openly doing the same. Even so, it was not until 1971 that US foreign policy was to take proper cognizance of this inclination in the all-important case of China.

Yet another example of the negative effect of treating the Middle East as being for Moscow a special case, in some eternal yet highly subjective sense, was to present itself in the autumn of 1973. In this instance, the negativism lay in its giving a substantial part of the liberal wing of American opinion too ready an opportunity to reconcile too super-
ficially two incompatible elements within its then current world view. One of these was that the time was ripe to consolidate detente in Europe; and that maybe the best way to achieve this was via a unilateral reduction of US forces in Germany. The other was that Israel was virtually blameless in its quarrel with the Arab states. So, by providing the latter with the military wherewithal to attack her, the Soviet Union had connived in - not to say instigated - an act of entirely unprovoked aggression.

Thus in October 1973, Senator Edward Kennedy sent a personal message to the Ankara meeting of the North Atlantic Assembly urging an early reduction of US force levels in the European theatre and cheerily averring that, 'What the Russians are doing in the Middle East should not destroy our confidence that we can move beyond the Cold War in Europe'. Several days later, he was in Brussels praising President Nixon for initiating a general war alert in connection with the Yom Kippur crisis.

Henceforward we need be careful not to distort our analyses of Soviet external aims by treating the Middle East as a special case in the peculiarly perennial sense just alluded to. When Moscow's policy in and around that sector is abrasive, this will be because of a direct interaction between regional factors and ones appertaining to overall Russian strategy at that particular time. Likewise, when that policy is cautious or even conciliatory, this will not in itself be conclusive proof that the USSR is committed to detente the world over. It might only mean that, for the present, better opportunities for strategic advance seem to be presenting themselves in Europe or elsewhere. In short, Russian statesmen are not, and never have been, peculiarly concerned to measuring their approach to warm-water ports.

However, the said myth cannot finally be exorcised unless its origins can be unravelled. Fortunately, this is not so hard to do. They stem from the way that, throughout the reign of Queen Victoria, the British Raj in Delhi and London worried constantly about India's security. Also, it was deeply distrustful of Russia's autocratic polity and medieval society. Accordingly, any Russian move that might conceivably threaten the approaches to India was
liable to arouse obsessive anxiety. In due course, the imperial tradition thus established was communicated to continental Europe and to North America.

A further shibboleth which figured in the initial debate about the invasion of Afghanistan and which also has its origins before 1900 (notably in the lurid fantasies of Kaiser Wilhelm) is that China poses a physical threat to Russia and perhaps through her to Europe. In November 1959, President de Gaulle spoke of China 'casting her eyes about her on the open spaces over which she must one day spread'. Seven years later, Sir Alec Douglas-Home, as he then was, opined to a Conservative Party conference in Britain that 'the direction of Chinese expansion was to the potentially rich province of central Asia which the Soviet Union at present claims as it own'. Soon, many commentators were pleased to argue that a well-founded apprehension about the 'Yellow Peril' was obliging Russia to establish détente with the West in order to preclude a dreaded war on two fronts. Shades again of the Kaiser!

Mind you, even if the Soviet Union really is apprehensive of a physical thrust from China along the lines of Genghiz Khan, then control of Afghanistan can only be seen as making a marginal contribution to the discouragement or parrying of it. After all, the common border between Afghanistan and China (a bleak and narrow sector at the eastern end of the axial mountain range known as the Hindu Kush) can be of little value to any party. True, a solid position on the Khyber Pass would abut China's ally, Pakistan. True also, it would bring Soviet military strength much closer to India, a country with which the USSR has had a consultative treaty since 1971. But how important in recent years has been the power balance of China and Pakistan versus the USSR and India? Not very.

Besides, the most essential point in this connection is that, objectively speaking, the issue has never really been that China poses a military threat to the USSR. It is that the latter poses one to her. One may concede, of course, that the Chinese may still retain a great potential for the waging of guerrilla war in depth. Surely, however, those Maoist 'fishes in a sea of people' have no part to play in the Gobi desert or much place else along the seven-thousand mile border between the Chinese People's Republic and its northern neighbours.
Meanwhile, the Soviet armed forces east of the Urals retain a big advantage in firepower and agility at every level from, let us say, regimental conventional conflict to strategic nuclear exchange.\textsuperscript{33} As much is well indicated by, for example, all we know of Chinese military aviation. Thus a high proportion of the large interceptor force is based, either through retention or by imitation, on the Soviet aeronautical science of twenty-five to thirty years ago. Nor are the respective echelons of light and medium bombers any more impressive. On the contrary, the former continued in 1979 to include one hundred Tupolev-2s, a machine which first entered Soviet air force service in 1944, while the latter still flew a few examples of the Tupolev-4, a type which first joined Soviet squadrons in 1949.

On the other hand, it is sometimes inferred that the Kremlin has feared an act of nuclear 'irrationality' on the part of Peking - meaning, above all, a nuclear first strike against Moscow itself plus other key cities. Nor can it be denied that the Chinese strategic deterrent (the manned bombers and, even more so, its far more vital strategic missiles) has long stood terribly exposed, technically speaking, to sudden destruction on the ground; and herein would lie a compelling reason, in a period of high tension, for releasing it preemptively. However, if Kremlin apprehensions on this score do wax intense, the best remedy lies in easing the psychological pressure on the Chinese by lowering Soviet force levels in the border regions. Above all, the USSR should be reducing its military presence in the Mongolian People's Republic, a territory which extends, do let us remember, to within 425 miles of Peking itself.

Yet instead, the Kremlin has steadily been consolidating this presence: acting, it would seem, in line with the precept - alluded to above - about the relevance, in a given situation, of blocks of military power, irrespective of whether these be intended for active use. Thus the land garrison introduced into Mongolia in 1966 had risen to three divisions by 1980 and five by 1983; and since 1980, Tupolev-22 swing-wing long-range bombers have been staged through Mongolian airfields.\textsuperscript{34} Meanwhile, the Politbüro in Ulan Bator has lately made no discernible attempt to revert to the more even-handed role between
Moscow and Peking that it did seem to be steering towards, at least as regards economic collaboration, for a while in the late 1950s.

So it is impossible to sustain the view that the USSR committed itself to Afghanistan so as to deter Chinese expansionism. Nor did that departure bear at all directly on renewed attempts to inhibit Chinese Communism from becoming still more individuated, thereby lending further encouragement to restiveness in Eastern Europe. But is this all there is to be said on the Chinese dimension? What of The Coming Decline of the Chinese Empire, a tract that Victor Louis managed to get published in the West in the summer of 1979?

Here, clearly, is a statement that no interpretation of Soviet motives ought to have ignored. After all, Mr Louis has become a most prominent and, one might add, affluent member of the Soviet establishment through acting as a window on the world for the KGB. Among the early forays of this son of a Frenchman, who had taken up Soviet citizenship after witnessing the Bolshevik revolution, was the introduction of young unofficial artists to Westerners, only to land them in trouble with the secret police. Later, he spirited out to the West the transcript of the session of the Union of Soviet Writers at which Boris Pasternak was expelled; and also a manuscript copy of Twenty Letters to a Friend by Svetlana Alleyueva, the daughter of Stalin. He has done diplomatic reconnoitres to Israel, Taiwan and so on. He played a key part in the release to the world of an officially authorised rendering of the memoirs of Khruschev. He has been involved in the diplomacy of withdrawal from the 1984 Olympic Games.

Ostensibly, the thesis of the said tract is that separatist sentiment in the peripheral regions of China is becoming irresistible, above all because of the growing strength and cohesion, as a rival pole of attraction, of Soviet Central Asia. However, no deep insight is today needed to read the whole of this exercise as one great allegory. In brief, it is not really China that is critically threatened, in Louis' real opinion, by the centrifugal forces of fringe nationalism. It is the USSR itself. For the secession of any part of Soviet Central Asia could trigger off within the latter a domino effect with a vengeance.
The justifications for reading it thus are various. Louis himself cites the situations of Transcaucasia and the Baltic states as parallel, albeit with lower profile. This apart, it is hard to comprehend how the central Asian region of the USSR could serve as a specific pole of attraction for ethnically-based dissent as far afield as Tibet and Manchuria. Nor can one overlook how, while stressing that the national minorities with which he is so concerned extend across 60 per cent of the land area of the Chinese People's Republic, Louis omits to mention that they comprise a mere five per cent of its population. Contrariwise, the corresponding percentage is over fifty in the USSR itself.

Where the most revealing clue lies, however, is in the very first chapter, the one which deals with 'Manchuria: A Country that is not'. Louis carefully draws our attention to the sinification of Manchuria since early modern times, noting that by 1900 some 80 per cent of the population was Han Chinese but that today the figure is 90. Yet he then proceeds as follows:

the three million Manchurians are still very much alive. But though far less numerous peoples elsewhere enjoy autonomy, independence or even UN membership, the people of Manchuria have been robbed of all these cherished attributes of nationhood. But for how long?

So here, alas, one sees again a classic ploy of Twentieth Century totalitarianism. The kind of proposition deliberately selected to clinch an argument is one that is arrant nonsense, logically or factually. This is because it better betokens ruthlessness to insist on a bad case than to uphold a good one. The only thing is that, in this instance, the face of ruthlessness is not being turned towards China. With the wisdom of hindsight, one can see that his warning was to the world; and it was that, at the present juncture at least, Soviet Central Asia could not be exposed to the spectacle of a Marxist-Leninist collapse in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Moreover, the inference that this was the paramount concern behind the progressively deeper involvement that culminated in the invasion of December 1979 is underpinned to some extent by a decision Moscow had announced that April. This was that the price paid for natural gas being
imported from Afghanistan was to be raised seventy-two per cent: a concession which promised to do much to redress the wide trade gap that country faced with the USSR, to say nothing of the outside world.\textsuperscript{37}

As just implied, however, too much must not be read into this particular piece of evidence. For the proportion of total Soviet consumption of natural gas coming from Afghanistan was well under one per cent. Yet as far as it goes, it does suggest that the importance of Afghanistan as an ideological glacis screening central Asia was deemed greater than that of the marginal state of the Soviet energy budget.

All of which can be read as revealing the overriding motive for the invasion as a politically defensive one. Yet here again the argument can get confused. Take, for example, the dialectic that apparently developed in Canberra between the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, and his Office of National Assessments. Reportedly, the latter said the Soviet move was defensive and therefore not too dangerous, whereas the former said it was offensive and hence menacing.

However, a defensive motive may bode more ill for the future than an offensive one. This is because it would be less voluntaristic and because the contradictions in the Soviet polity that had given rise to it may worsen with the passage of time. What this episode demonstrates, in fact, is how extensive the Soviet communal or nationality crisis already threatens to become. Evidently, it is still the nationalities inside the European borders of the USSR that pose the biggest problem in this respect. But similar difficulties in Central Asia and also in Transcaucasia are liable to become more acute.
THE OUTLOOK IN NEAR EAST MAJOR

(a) Its Strategic Singularity

As last winter closed in, there seemed no sign of the war in Afghanistan coming to an end, despite the internal divisions among the insurgents and the enormous logistical problems they faced. The previous January, a truce had been agreed by the Soviets with the local guerrilla commanders in the Panjishir Valley: a key feature in the Hindu Kush. This may have been an initial overture of conciliation on the part of the Andropov regime in Moscow. First and foremost, however, it betokened the failure of an offensive sustained by 30,000 Russian troops (with lavish air support) in that district since the previous April.

At the same time, too, armed conflict was in progress in the Kurdish part of Iran; around the Iran-Iraq border; in the Lebanon; in Eritrea; and in Chad. In other words, enough was going on to justify the region in question being regarded as the most extensively fissiparous in the world: a zone of active or latent conflict further flung than Southern Africa and far more so than the waist of Central America. Never mind that Soviet combat troops were actively participant in just the one territory.

So how may this zone be defined? In the nineteenth century, the British adopted the term 'Near East' to embrace South-West Asia and North-East Africa. Occasionally, India was included, this in accordance with the fears that Russia was bearing down on the Khyber. Quite often, too, the Balkans would be counted in as well. Indeed, the term 'Near East Proper' was sometimes applied to them. Here again, Russia is the common factor.

Then after the final collapse both of Czarist Russia and of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, that regional identification gradually came to appear less useful. So by 1940 it was being superseded by 'Middle East', in British Commonwealth parlance if not yet in American. A fair indication of what this term was usually deemed to embrace is afforded
by the ambit of the Middle East Supply Centre established by the British in 1941. For this extended from Malta and Libya, eastward to Iran and southwards to the Somalilands.

Yet by the 1970s, the said expression was often employed as though it could legitimately refer just to Israel and the 'front-line' Arab states. Originally, this usage may have been favoured because it seemed to play down the notion that the Arab-Israel conflict was quite the gravest within the region. However, it had ended up by conveying precisely the opposite impression.

So with the virtually concurrent development of major crises in Afghanistan and Iran, a strong predilection developed in Washington for reverting to an older term, 'South-West Asia'. It was hoped this would connote the importance (many now said the primacy) of the Gulf in regional strategy. Also, this wording commended itself as standing in opposition to 'North-East Asia': the term applied to another area which might prove the cockpit for a Superpower crisis.

However, that does not really fit the bill either. All else apart, the delineation of Asia as such is of little relevance here. The true bounds of the geostrategic region we must concern ourselves with are surely as follows. To the West, Libya has to be included because of the maverick aspirations of Colonel Gadafi. But the Maghreb need not be since it has long been quite successful in isolating itself from the interactions of Middle East states. The fact that Tunis has now become the centre for the Arafat wing of the PLO is unlikely to affect this judgement much.

To the South, the Negro-versus-Arab ethnic divide appears quite decisive, as witness the anger and fear in Black Africa over Libya's aiming in Chad for the kind of leverage it once sought through Amin in Uganda. Meanwhile, on the Indian Ocean littoral, Kenya remains virtually untouched by the troubles that beset the Horn of Africa. Granted, South Africa values the symbolism attaching to her military links with Israel and tends to emulate Israeli military strategy. However, the two situations never interact all that closely.

To the East, the presence in Pakistan of some four million Afghan refugees highlights the involvement of that country with the strategic arena we are endeavouring to
delimit. Yet if Pakistan is to be reckoned in, then so should India be. Still, one need go no further. The Himalayas will be a peaceful border zone so long as China remains aligned with the West; and Burma's quasi-isolation makes her the most classic of buffer states.

To the North, it would be hard to include Turkey without Greece, not quite for Truman-style reasons but because Cyprus and NATO are important common factors. Twenty years ago, indeed, Saul Cohen pointedly noted that the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the State Department was overseeing its Greek desk; and that the purview of the United Nations Commission to Foster Economic Development in the Middle East extended from Pakistan through to Greece. But here again, there is no great need to go beyond. Macedonia and the other northern provinces of Greece now constitute a boom area rather than a zone of Cold War confrontation. Correspondingly, the Macedonian question is these days more between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria than between these two Communist states and Greece.

'Near East Major' might be as suitable a name as any for the geostrategic arena that could be delimited thus. Adopting this then, our task is to explore its singular significance in terms of global strategy.

What must be entered straightaway, however, is the firmest of caveats. This is that virtually any part of today's world might, at very short notice, prove critical to the fortunes of Mankind as a whole. Take the Falklands dispute, for example. An outline map of the world unearthed by one of Britain's leading television channels, in order to serve as a backdrop for several studio discussions of the 1982 crisis as that unfolded, did not even have the islands in question drawn on it, so low had their relevance previously been rated. Yet it is only too easy to imagine several outcomes of the ensuing confrontation between Britain and Argentina that could have had the most appalling ramifications world-wide.

Suppose, for example, the United Kingdom had sorrowfully decided that it could do nothing but accept the Argentinian takeover as a fait accompli. A most disturbing precedent for the triumph of force majeure would have been established in respect of dozens of territorial disputes in Latin America and elsewhere.
Let us alternatively suppose that Britain's Task Force had sailed but then been defeated. Over and above all else, the effects on Britain herself and hence on the Atlantic Alliance would surely have been mortifying. Then again, the consequences might have been grim had victory been secured only through military operations against the Argentinian mainland and/or a collapse of the debt-laden Argentine economy (see Chapters 1 and 5).

Making the general case, however, it would be hard to argue that South or Central America could provide the 'Sarajevo' for World War Three anything like as readily as 'Near East Major' might. The USSR has little capability, let alone inclination, to confront the USA in the former region. What is more, there may be a disposition (derivative from 'Vietnam') to underestimate the ability of the USA and its allies to manage the insurgency crisis in Central America. After all, the combined population of El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua (the states most fully involved) is considerably below that of, say, Iraq.

Similarly, the situation in Southern Africa seems unlikely to give rise, for a long time ahead, to the ultimate hazard: a stark confrontation between two implacable Superpowers. The United States might be extremely reluctant to commit herself wholeheartedly to the Republic of South Africa, even if the latter were on the point of caving in because of a combination of internal and external pressure. Nor is the South African regime at all near to that point yet. Instead, it seems currently to enjoy the strategic initiative.

Then again, the respective spheres of influence in Europe have been defined with precision; and this division is brutally confirmed by the respective panoplies of nuclear deterrence. In Near East Major, on the other hand, the corresponding spheres are ill-defined, fluid and continually overlapping: not unlike the Balkans in the decades that led up to 1914. Meanwhile, the commitment of the USA to Israel remains very strong and almost unconditional, while the USSR is extensively involved with almost all the more radical parts of the Arab world. Nor does one have to resurrect Nineteenth Century shibboleths about Muscovite armies moving down 'interior lines of communication' (see Chapters 2 and 5) to the 'warm-water ports' of the Gulf.
and so on, in order to be persuaded that the Kremlin does have more scope for direct military intervention here than in more distant regions or, for the present, in NATO Europe.

Furthermore, the sense that this region possesses a strategic singularity all of its own is strongly reinforced by consideration of various of its intrinsic features. Almost certainly, too much has been made of the declining importance of the Middle East's oil and correspondingly of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC): the cartel that is largely based on that area. If one ignores the huge but none too accessible deposits of rather heavy oil in the 'Orinoco belt' off the Venezuelan coast, one finds that whereas in 1970 some 67 per cent of the world's officially proven oil reserves were in the Middle East, by 1980 the figure was down to 58: a significant but not a dramatic fall. On the other hand, the drop in OPEC's share of the world's oil market has been marked. Excluding the requirements of the Communist countries, nearly two-thirds of world needs were provided by OPEC in 1973. In 1983, barely 40 per cent was.

Even so, the low production costs of Gulf oil, in particular, still ensures that it would once again become exceptionally competitive, were oil prices to resume the downward plunge they did suddenly take early in 1983. In the meantime, much of Western Europe remains heavily dependent on Middle Eastern supplies, as does Japan. Furthermore, there are now firm indications that the USSR, along with the rest of Eastern Europe, is going to have to import increasing amounts of petroleum, through the turn of this decade.

Then there is the alter ego of the volume of international indebtedness identified in Chapter 1 as a most serious threat to economic tranquility. What is here alluded to is the amassing by OPEC members (not least those around the Gulf) of surplus funds sufficiently large to menace the system of international payments simply through their transference from bourse to bourse.

Not that this situation is as bad as some analysts apprehended in the early aftermath of the 1973 war. The recipients of petrodollars have absorbed more money in their own economic and social development than then seemed possible; have invested more heavily in the West; and have,
in most cases, spent lavishly on defence. Besides all of which, the real price of oil has on the whole been lower these last few years than had generally been expected.

Still, the problem has by no means disappeared, as these two examples show. Saudi Arabia now has 200 billion dollars invested overseas, in varying states of liquidity. Meanwhile, the Kuwaitis have built up a strategic financial reserve which already stands at 100 billion dollars. It is known as the Kuwait Fund for Future Generations.

As just implied, there has also been a big military build-up right across the region. Take, for instance, the procurement of advanced fighter aircraft: MiG-23s and -25s plus their American and French equivalents. Among the countries that had such planes in service by late 1982 were Egypt, Greece, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates.

Nor can the military nuclear dimension be ignored. Israel's strike against the Iraqi nuclear site in 1981 appears to have thwarted whatever ambitions Baghdad had in this direction. But almost certainly, Israel herself has virtually completed the fabrication of nuclear warheads, while India has openly effected full fabrication - albeit under the guise of becoming able thus to conduct demolitions for civil engineering work. Meanwhile, Pakistan has advanced towards the nuclear threshold, aided and abetted by Libya, Niger and Saudi Arabia. Iran (in the Shah's time, that is to say) and Turkey have also evinced an interest in keeping a nuclear option open.\footnote{44}

Considering geopolitics in the round, there is no denying that Israel still enjoys (or is obliged to live with) a special nodality within the area. For one thing, differences over the character and degree of the support she may merit in certain circumstances undoubtedly figures among the issues that might one day sunder the Western alliance beyond repair. The biggest risk of this stems, of course, from differences between the United States and Western Europe.

Not that there would ever be much basis in terms of political logic for such a trans-Atlantic split. North American opinion is no longer as solidly pro-Israeli as it used generally to be. Obversely, Western European opinion
is most certainly not pro-Arab in anything approaching a comprehensive or absolute sense. Turning to the Pacific theatre, one might add that similar nuances and ambiguities are to be observed in the Arabist alignment of Japan and perhaps in the considerable warmth towards Israel felt still in Australia.

However, this particular question is never one of mere logic. Indeed, it dips well below the surface of mere politics, exposing as it does so complex and sometimes murky cultural cross-currents. Certain strands in pro-Zionism (e.g. in parts of Western Europe and the American Deep South) represent an inversion of the anti-Semitism that has for so long been one of the ugliest of the bends sinister across Western society. Likewise, some of the strands in anti-Zionism (e.g. in the more fascistic sectors of the New Left) are a straight continuation of this grim lineage. Meanwhile, a still widespread admiration for Israel as a patriotic young democracy fighting for survival in the ancient Holy Land reflects in no small measure profound, if incoherent, reservations about the hedonistic Western societies of the late Twentieth Century.

Given so confused a background, there must indeed be a risk that, in the context of another Middle Eastern crisis, seemingly marginal differences between the two sides of the Atlantic (e.g. over the volume and urgency of arms supplies to Israel or over the transit through European skies of the US Rapid Deployment Force) could lead to a fatal rupture of the all-important Atlantic dimension of the Western alliance. In the wake of 'Yom Kippur', in fact, there were some acute spasms, even from within the ranks of such embattled upholders of Truman-style globalism as the senior leadership of the AFL-CIO, the American trade union confederation. In the autumn of 1974, Lane Kirkland, then the Secretary-Treasurer of AFL-CIO and now its President, spoke thus apropos of trans-Atlantic differences over the Middle East, anything but clear-cut though these were:

Our old allies in Europe are in the process of surrendering control of their honour and destiny to their former puppets. It is time to force their
choice of which side they are going to be on, and nothing is to be gained by further evasion, temporising or delay. If we are to stand alone, with Israel, we may as well know it now.46

Very similar reactions were evinced towards the EEC’s declaration on Palestinian self-determination at its Venice summit of June 1980. As late as the following January, that once fervent Atlanticist, Dr Henry Kissinger, was publicly implying that 'Europe' was duly to be held responsible for a dangerous lack of coordination between itself and the USA over Middle East policy. He went on to remark

I do not see how we can go on indefinitely insisting on united defence and separate foreign policies.47

What then of the interaction between the West and militant Islam? How close has the Islamic revival brought us to a redrawing of the old battle-line between Christians and Moslems?

Perhaps the first proposition to nail is that one must not read events in Iran as a measure of the overall strength of the said revival. For the Iranian revolution has been effected by the most radical and fervent wing of Islam, the Shi'as. Their organisation, especially in its financial aspects, facilitates autonomous action. Still more important, their theology is millenarian. In their particular version of the climacteric upheaval followed by a 'thousand years of peace', the decisive event is the arrival on Earth of the hidden 'Twelfth Imam': perhaps in the person of Ali, the 'wrongfully' deposed cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammed.

In the Islamic world as a whole, the Shi'as are outnumbered nine-to-one by the other wing, the Sunnis. Granted, the former are in a majority in Iran and Bahrain; and are actually the largest single community in the Lebanon. Yet even in that country they are divided into Arab Shi'as; those Shi'as of Iranian descent who became Arabised generations ago; and Iranian Shi'as (mainly labourers) of recent origin.
Still, an Islamic revival in a lower key is widely evident. It has lately been vigorous enough even in Sarajevo and neighbouring parts of Yugoslavia to worry the Belgrade authorities. In Malaysia, the United Malays National Organisation (the biggest party in the coalition government) has been instrumental in the setting up of an Islamic bank, which forsweares interest, as well as an Islamic University. Meanwhile, new mosques are springing up everywhere; and the government has proscribed Malays gambling in the country's casinos.

But always such resurgence is riven with contradictions. At the foreign policy level, two of the more fervently Islamic of the Arab states, Libya and Saudi Arabia, did quietly join forces in sending assistance to the Moros revolution after that had developed among the Moslems of Mindanao in the southern Philippines. In the much nearer and more ominous Gulf war, however, Libya was to come out strongly against Iraq. The Saudis, on the other hand, were soon to give Iraq extensive economic aid. Then again, though Libya began nuclear collaboration with Pakistan as early as 1973, it kept carefully open for several years the alternative of collaboration with India.

When it comes to internal policy, the puritan ethic within Islam often acts as a barrier to progress, Western-style. Correspondingly, the use of the theocratic principle to legitimise a state is usually to the benefit of the more conservative forces within it. Writing of Pakistan, Mohammed Ayoob observed that on the one hand, the slogan 'Islam in Danger' was used to whip up public hysteria against India, thereby giving Pakistan's military establishment much greater political clout. On the other hand, the same slogan was used to suppress domestic dissent - whether from the provincial autonomists ... or from those democratic politicians who dared ... to demand general elections in the country. It was no mere coincidence, therefore, that no general elections were held in Pakistan from 1947 to 1970.

Contrariwise, however, that same puritanism can provide the rationale for revolutionary politics directed against existing regimes and, more fundamentally, against
the dominant civilisation of the West. So it is that Colonel
Gadafi was able to emerge as an aider and abetter of
fascist-Marxist terrorism: the friend of 'Carlos', the IRA,
and so on. He is similarly enabled to condemn as oppressive
all governments bar his own, the South Yemeni, the Syrian
and the Soviet.

Yet immediately one comes up against another contra­
diction. This is that whatever may be the future order
envisioned by the Islamic radicals themselves, the one 'their
audience - slum-dwellers of Tehran, miserable fellahs in the
Mesopotamian countryside, Bedouins with transistors - will
paradoxically read into their promises is one which is the
mirror-image of what the West is believed to be today. When
the leaders talk of the coming reign of justice, their
audience will have in mind a Californian horn of plenty, a
Swedish haven of sexual liberation'.

(b) From Bad to Worse?

If the revolution in Iran is quite the most extreme of
the contemporary manifestations of Islamic militancy, then it
is likely to throw into exceptionally high relief its various
discordances. Correspondingly, the majority of commen­
tators expect that the exit from this mortal life of Ayatollah
Khomeini (an event unlikely to be long delayed) will lead to
turbulence within the country. What can also be said,
however, is that few now believe that the immediate outcome
will be a swing to the Marxist Left.

One source of such scepticism has been the recent fate
of the Tudeh party: the long-established and Moscow­
oriented Communist Party of Iran. During and after the
overthrow of the Shah's regime, the Tudeh collaborated
closely with the religious leadership, much as it had done
during the Mossadeq revolutionary era of the early 1950s.
Accordingly, it escaped the waves of persecution the rest
of the secular Left were subject to from the summer of
1979. During the first several months of 1983, however,
several thousand of its members were arrested. So now the
party is de-legitimised and all but broken, as witness the
craven recantations of its erstwhile leaders.
Meanwhile, the Islamic Republican Party (which has close links with the clergy, especially those who are at once highly militant and very fundamentalist) continues as a powerful mass movement, notably among the slum-dwellers of south Tehran. Correspondingly, the balance of advantage within the senior religious leadership is currently with the decidely conservative elements, not the relatively liberal ones. Then again, the army remains firmly in being, its prestige and self-assurance now somewhat revived by the Gulf War with Iraq.

Yet irrespective of the prospective demise of Khomeini, or of the likelihood of an acute economic crisis affecting Iran, all too solid grounds remain for apprehending that the next phase in the Iranian revolution could see the start of a Marxian revival in association with the mullahs: the alliance of the 'Reds' and the 'Blacks' about which the late Shah used to warn the West, partly in the light of his experience with Mossadegh. One consideration is, of course, that the army is largely locked in confrontation with either the Iraqis or the Kurds. Another is that, even in the Nineteenth Century, there was some tendency for Islamic radicals in Persia to seek common cause with Russia against the West. A third is that, as of June 1984, the American influence in the Gulf War was tilted in favour of Iraq.

More basically, it is clear that, the armed forces partially excepted, this revolution has been devastatingly successful at sweeping away the institutional infrastructure of the old order. In other words, it has deprived counter-revolution of a matrix within which to flourish. Correspondingly, it has created a quasi-vacuum in which the intellectual lumber of Marx and the cellular structure extolled by Lenin might quite readily be implanted. An instructive precedent can be seen in the Japanese occupation of North China in World War Two. For the harshness of their regime there (most notably in the 'Three Alls' reprisal policy of 'kill all'; 'burn all'; 'loot all') completely shattered the pre-existing political and social structure. Therefore, the way lay open for the Communist Party to expand from a few tens of thousand cadres hanging on in Yenan (which is all it could be described as in 1937) to a movement exercising control over 100 million people, which is what it had become by 1945.
A further comparison to draw is that the militant Shi'a mullahs recapitulate, unwittingly and in a different idiom, virtually all the basic concepts being enunciated in the France of 200 years ago by that amoral egomaniac, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Unfortunately, his anti-individualist and anti-cosmopolitan political philosophy has already had an impact on the modern world extending far beyond its serving as a catalyst for the French Revolution of 1789. For linkage can readily be traced via that climacteric event with the attitudes of Robespierre and the theories of Hegel; and thence with the xenophobic totalitarianism of tyrants like Hitler and Stalin.

Similarly today, the Shi'ite militant would endorse with little compunction Rousseau's dictum that 'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains'. Likewise, he shares his loathing of such despotisms as are part of an old-established order; his admiration of an emotional commitment to organic nationalism; and his frequent manifestations of impatience with minority rights and personal liberty, an impatience that led him to declaim that men must 'be forced to be free'. Therefore, such a character could, under certain circumstances, all too easily ally with fascisto-Marxists of the extreme Left.

Evidently, those circumstances could include military confrontation with the West or an economic crisis that threatened to defer indefinitely a 'Californian horn of plenty'. They could well include Soviet entrenchment in neighbouring Afghanistan (and maybe parts of Northern Persia?), perhaps in association with a more indigenous swing to the Marxian Left in neighbouring Iraq. Here one has to note that the USSR seems to be making some military progress with her 1984 summer offensive in Afghanistan.

The main elements in Iraq's present situation are as follows. Her undeveloped oil reserves may be the greatest, after Saudi Arabia's, anywhere in the region. On the other hand, her immediate economic prospects have been vitiated by the 'Gulf War' with Iran. Proof enough of this is to be seen in the drop in hard currency reserves from 30 billion dollars to five billion; in the coercive campaign for 'voluntary' contributions of jewellery or other forms of wealth; and in the near total withdrawal from direct public view of Saddam Hussein himself. Still, outright military
defeat was averted early in 1984, though only by a liberal use of poison gas and by the import of exotic weaponry from the USSR and France.

As and when the Hussein government does fall, there may simply be a realignment of power among the senior army officers and the Ba'athist politicians. However, an acute economic crisis could so interact with a burgeoning desire to end the war as to precipitate some more fundamental shift. This could hardly be in the direction of Islam, if only because the Iraqi Shi'ites lack both the weight and the coherence to provide the necessary impetus. So it would most likely be towards the anti-Western Left, this in respect of external policies though perhaps not internal ones. Clearly, too, this could strongly favour a reconciliation with Syria, partly because a breach with Damascus has been one of Saddam Hussein's more consistent aims both before and after his becoming Iraq's President in 1979. Moreover, the path to a rapport with Tehran could lie through Damascus.

The formation thus of a radical Northern tier would certainly constitute a threat to every other regime in the Gulf, beset as each one is by the instabilities engendered by an economic development that is highly dynamic yet erratic and imbalanced. Still, the polity which must always receive a special mention in such contexts is Saudi Arabia.

The present indications are that, assuming the Gulf War will not escalate too savagely, this most singular of countries does not face an early upheaval. A very even division of military manpower as between the army and a National Guard is, in fact, a stratagem tacitly adopted to lessen the risk of a coup. In addition to this, the internal security network is ferociously efficient. Stability is underpinned, too, by the very low density of population: the same factor as, for instance, weighed so heavily against Che Guevara in the high plateaux of Bolivia.

Nor should one forget that revolutionary unrest has occurred as recently as 1979. That November, some 200 religious zealots (most of them Sunnis from the west of the country) seized the Great Mosque at Mecca, while at much the same time two or three months of disturbances began among Shi'ite workers in the oil-producing region of the East. In January 1980, however, 63 of the Mecca rebels were to be publicly beheaded and many others given long
terms in prison. Meanwhile, a combination of conciliation and repression served to bring the situation among the oil workers under control. But the fact that this double challenge was presented and thwarted then should ensure stability through the middle 1980s at any rate.

Looking beyond that, however, one cannot disregard the tradition of fierce feuding among the hundreds of Saudi royal princes. More fundamentally, it might be even more foolish to disregard the contradictions inherent in the incessant undercutting by a massive new economy based on petrodollars of 'a timeless world of sabers, falconry, Bedouin tents, and fortified oases dominated by the spiritual dominion of the Koran'.55 The rapid spread of scholastic education for both sexes throughout the 1970s is very liable to result by 1990 in the starkest of generation gaps. More self-willed bureaucracies are likewise to be anticipated.56 At the same time, urbanisation is having a manifold impact.

Almost irrespective of the exact political mechanics of the process, one upshot of all this is likely to be a significant radicalisation of foreign policy. That is to say, a changing Saudi Arabia might well become willing to accommodate itself to a radical Northern tier. Needless to say, such a willingness could have a ripple effect throughout the Arabian peninsula.

How then would such an alignment affect the West including Israel? Part of the answer must lie in whatever interest is shown in the situation by the USSR. That will, in its turn, be essentially a function of the interaction between Soviet internal and external policies (see Chapters 2 and 5). Still, it may be particularly influenced by Moscow's concern to bolster her position in Afghanistan. For though Iran may have been giving little practical aid to the Afghan rebels, the formation there of a Black-Red axis would further weaken their morale. So, having intervened in Afghanistan in order to secure Soviet Central Asia, the USSR may feel impelled to intervene somehow in Iran in order to try and secure Afghanistan. An obvious analogy is with Britain's going into Egypt to protect her imperial trunk route through Suez and then into the Sudan to protect Egypt.
Manifestly, the attitude of Syria is crucial, if only because Damascus always sees great advantage in a 'no peace, no war' equilibrium with Israel. Indeed, the only common theme behind her various gyrations in the Lebanon since 1973 has been a concern to preserve or restore that subtle balance. Such a state of affairs has helped to preserve the hold on Syria itself of what is, after all, a decidedly minority Alawite regime under President Assad; and it could well perform a similarly useful service to a successor administration. Never mind that to precipitate open war with the Israelis would be to court, at least as far as the near future is concerned, further heavy defeats.

Furthermore, 'no peace, no war' presents much scope for upholding the 'Greater Syria' tradition through continual interference in Lebanese affairs. Even without a strong garrison in the Bekaa valley, Damascus would always be able to cut off, by means of overland blockade, 80 per cent of the trade through the port of Beirut. Her refusal to underwrite the Israel-Lebanon withdrawal agreement of May 1983 has enjoyed the approval or connivance of the Arab world at large, with only Egypt and Jordan excepted. Though her relations with the Lebanese Druze have been ambivalent in the past, she has lately proved able to exploit the way active Druze fears for the near future are coupled with a long-standing resentment at what they regard as a quite inadequate place in the Lebanese scheme of things. So it is that this community has emerged as the willing linch-pin of a broad coalition against the Phalangist government of Amin Gemayel. Part of the surviving PLO field force has also been aligned with it, perhaps to betoken the toughness of the attitude being struck towards the pre-existing order.

Nor dare one assume that the pursuit of this sort of policy will be constrained at all critically by the fear that Israel may resort to armed force to impose a mutual withdrawal agreement on her own terms. For the time being, the deep divisions within Israel over the whole question of the Lebanon involvement are in themselves enough to make any such initiative unlikely. In the longer term, the Israelis may lose the absolute ascendancy in air warfare that was so decisively a factor in their victory in the Lebanon war of 1982.
The justification for this last surmise is partly that the Soviets (also seeing much advantage in 'no peace, no war') might supply Syria with still more of their own advanced aircraft and surface-to-air weapons. It is partly that the qualitative gap in technology (above all, in electronic technology) between the USSR and the West may eventually shrink in certain important respects. But it is, first and foremost, because of a more general probability that warplanes will become a great deal more vulnerable, in the course of the next 10 years or so, to anti-aircraft defences.57

Admittedly, this prospective shift in the tactical air balance is one that has already been the subject of some false dawns, notably during the Arab-Israel war of 1973. All the same, a strong consensus is now building to the effect that it cannot be deferred much longer. What this would mean, at a particular time and place, would depend on a variety of contingent circumstances. But the likelihood is that it will bolster the Syrian military position in relation to Israel.

In the meantime, the appeal to Damascus of the current confrontation is further increased by a desire to take some kind of revenge on Israel for past defeats and for her formal annexation of the Golan Heights. The Syrian authorities will be well aware that for Israel to be obliged to remain in occupation of much of southern Lebanon would be an acute embarrassment to her in many ways. Not the least of them is that the longer she remains, the harder it may become for her ever to pull out, if only because of obligations incurred to such parties as the erstwhile followers of the late Major Sa'ad Haddad.

All of which serves to highlight how the Lebanon incursion of 1982 has posed as never before fundamental questions about Israeli strategy and, indeed, national identity. Thus, ignoring for the moment the wider connotations, one cannot but observe profound ambiguity of motive behind the incursion itself. Though the immediate occasion was an assassination attempt on the Israeli Ambassador to Britain, the emotional build-up to some such foray had been evident for several months previously.58 Furthermore, though there seems to have been a fairly high degree of support throughout Israel and also in the USA
for the Begin government's declared intention of advancing just 25 miles in order to abort a PLO military build-up, this consensus sundered as the advance continued right into Beirut.

As regards the aims behind this extended offensive, General Sharon himself was soon at pains to insist that everything had been done to minimise the anguish to civilians consequent upon the forceful expulsion of the PLO. Even so, it is difficult to avoid the impression that one underlying purpose was to capture the PLO leadership and, in the aftermath of so signal a triumph, to encourage widespread expulsions of Palestinians from the Lebanon as a precursor to a comparable exodus from the West Bank.

As much is suggested by the systematic elimination of the civilian infrastructure (health, education, archival, etc.) of the Palestinians. So is it by a close relationship between the Israeli high command and (a) Major Haddad's militia and (b) the Phalangist 'Lebanese forces', then led by Bashir Gemayel and so still ferociously committed to 'free the Lebanon of foreigners'. Inevitably, the responsibility borne by Sharon and certain senior Israeli officers in regard to the massacre by the 'Lebanese forces' at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps adds credence to this more negative interpretation.

At all events, the results of the said campaign today appear heavily adverse. Undoubtedly, too much was made in certain respects of the military weakening of the PLO. Beforehand, its military status vis-à-vis Israel never looked like rising above that of an irritant. Even now, on the other hand, its military potency vis-à-vis the Lebanon as such is far from negligible. In any case, one should not make too much of the importance of the military factor in the PLO's future influence. Nor, indeed, of the essentiality of the PLO in its present form to the broader Palestinian quest for self-determination.

What is currently of moment, none the less, is the way the PLO's withdrawal from Beirut left its main field forces hopelessly exposed to Syrian manipulation, and hence has led to a bitter internal divide between pro-Arafat and pro-Assad factions. Alas, neither the character nor the circumstances of this savage (and perhaps permanent) rupture yet look conducive to the more peaceable approach to the Israel-Palestine question that Yassir Arafat or some
people close to him may have been exploring. Rather, the new situation seems bound to favour the consolidation for a while, albeit under still tighter Syrian control, of the PLO's fascisto-Marxist hard core. Meanwhile, the assassination of Bashir Gemayel has sharply diminished Israel's leverage within the Lebanon.

Furthermore, this whole episode has thrown into conspicuously high relief an ideological polarisation within Israel itself between social democracy and what one can only call the racialistic Revisionist Zionism of the late Vladimir Jabotinsky. The former, for so long the mainstream of Israeli politics, has been chiefly associated with the Haganah guerrillas and the Labor Party. The latter has predominantly been identified with the Irgun under Menachem Begin and lately with Likud under him or Yitzhak Shamir.

To an uncomfortable extent, this polarisation is epitomised by the domestic Israeli reaction to the Sabra and Chatila massacre:

Here the speed which the Israeli media and judiciary intervened, the thoroughness of the investigation and the comprehensiveness of the Kahan Report restored the faith of Israel's supporters in the fundamental attachment to the civilian values of the Israeli elite, and of their capacity in the last resort to bring their government to heel. But we cannot forget the attempts of Begin and Sharon first to conceal, then to shrug off what had happened, nor the vociferous support they found in the streets when they attempted to so so.60

Since when, Israel has become locked into the occupation of much of South Lebanon: an invidious situation from which disengagement may prove increasingly difficult, given the grim satisfaction felt by Syria and, behind her, the USSR with the existing situation. Worse, the accelerating introduction of Jewish settlements all across the West Bank, already inhabited by hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs, is crystallising a demographic contradiction that fatally undermines the whole concept of Israel as a Zionist democracy.
Just how serious the connotations of this departure are has lately been spelt out by Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress:

the Begin government already has what it wants, that is, freedom of action on the West Bank to achieve its ideological ends. It does not want to be pushed to freeze the settlements, nor does it want to be stampeded by its own hardliners toward annexation. Several years of increased settlement activity are all that is really necessary, from the Likud's point of view, to put an end to the problem of the West Bank ... this is a change of a magnitude very nearly equal to the historic turning which the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 represented.61

He goes on to condemn as 'dangerously naive'62 the view that the bitterness and frustration this entrenchment is likely to engender across the Arab world could prove strategically beneficial:

Israel may be better off, for a very short period, with political disintegration in the neighbouring Arab states, but mobocracies and Khomeini-type regimes, despite their military weakness, are likely to be even more unpleasant neighbours than the more rational ones that exist now ... More seriously, still, instability in the Middle East is the happy hunting ground of the Soviets. Arab angers directed at Israel will find their patron, as they always have, in the Russians.63

Clearly, there will always be room to differ over the nuances of such interpretations. Thus enough has here been said to cast some doubt on any notion that close approximations to the Khomeini regime might regularly arise. Besides which, the extent of any Soviet involvement in the region has to depend on the internal-external dialectic referred to above.

Still, it goes almost without saying that the West (Israel included) has little to gain from a rising generation of Arabs (to say nothing of Turks, Iranians, Pakistanis, etc.) thus being rendered even more resentful of the USA and her major allies than its members are liable to be for quite other reasons. To put the argument at its most basic
and localised, such a state of affairs would make it very difficult to build up an adequate framework of 'collective security' in that crisis-prone region. For one thing, proper Israeli participation would continue to be ruled out. For another, the contingent provision of base facilities to Western nations might become harder for other indigenous regimes to agree to.

Nor is this dimension the only one to consider, even when thinking purely in regional terms. Another is that an Israel at peace with its neighbours could contribute richly to the economic development of the whole area. Take, for example, the imaginative scheme to generate large volumes of hydro-electricity by means of a canal descending the 1,300 feet from the Mediterranean coast near Gaza to the Dead Sea. If a political settlement had already been achieved, that bold scheme could underpin it admirably. Yet in the absence of such a settlement, it could prove a veritable bombshell.

But in the search for a way out of this critical dilemma, it is vital to recognise how inept have been most of the interventions in this conflict from the West at large, certainly since Israel's seizure of the West Bank and the Gaza in 1967. Fundamental issues of the sort just alluded to have rarely been raised, at least until just recently. At the same time, however, a combination of factors has only too often given the Israelis grounds for feeling that both media and governments judge their day-to-day actions far more severely than do they those of their neighbours. Then again, Israel's critics in the West have too often overstated the immediate risk of oil embargoes, Soviet intervention, violent revolutions or other disruptive developments occurring during or consequent upon particular Middle East crises.

Yet every bit as unhelpful has been a collateral disposition to promote formulae for instant and comprehensive solutions. From UN Security Council resolution 242 of November 1967 to the Reagan Plan of September 1982, the aim has too often been to impose a static political framework onto a situation that is, in truth, highly dynamic. In this respect, at any rate, the Camp David accords of 1978 made a refreshing change. Unfortunately, however, their chances of leading on to a comprehensive
peace were vitiated by the lack of a clear understanding on the already crucial question of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied in 1967, East Jerusalem included.

When one alludes to the dynamics of this situation, however, one is not referring just to more intensive settlement or to certain other highly repressive aspects of the Likud occupation regimen. Even before the formation of the first Likud government in 1977, the West Bank and, perhaps more equivocally, the Gaza were gravitating towards Israel rather than East Bank Jordan. What is more, this tendency was being particularly encouraged by some of the more benign aspects of the Israeli impact. Among them were the modest strength, good personal behaviour and normally low profile of the garrison force; the acknowledged fact that the local Arab press had usually been freer than under Jordanian rule; the appreciable sums spent on development, even outside East Jerusalem; the encouragement of a sustained agricultural boom; and the permits granted to tens of thousands of Arabs to take up manual work in Israel.64

Besides which, there can be little doubt that Israel's strategic analysts make a militarily sound appreciation when they say that, with technological progress raising the military dividends to be gained from sudden armoured thrusts, the permanent location of her security frontier along the River Jordan has become imperative. Moreover, the point is underlined by the endemic threat of reciprocal terrorism by the PLO and Jewish 'vigilante' groups.

Agreed, the said stipulation would not in itself rule out an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank within the context of a demilitarisation agreement. But, as things stand, it does cap all the other elements in an indissoluble nexus.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that mutual hostility between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs is currently worse than at any time since 1948, at least. Nor can one deny either that this applies as much to the young generation as to its elders. As in Cyprus and Ulster, the intercommunal battle lines are now drawn so firmly as to constrain and warp the more generous impulses of youth.

For this and many other reasons, further blueprints for Palestinian self-government would serve no useful purpose. What is needed is a more evolutionary approach,
based on a return to the electoral process that has been in abeyance on the West Bank and in the Gaza since 1976. That April municipal elections were successfully held. True, the results were a clean sweep for candidates declaring support for the PLO. Even so, there may here be the basis for a split within that movement which can be creative and ought to be encouraged: namely, one between the authentic representatives of the Palestinians living under occupation (and so intimately concerned with the evolution of peace) and the Marxist revolutionaries that always wax too prominent in the politics of the Palestinian diaspora.

Not that Israel is the only example in Near East Major of parliamentary government under stress. Evidently, the communal democracies the Lebanon and Cyprus have ambiguously aspired to be have progressively been shattered, while in Turkey and India the future of two other parliamentary sovereignties established (like Israel's and the Lebanon's) nearly 40 years ago is far from assured.

The Turkish army moved in 1960 to end a decade of rule by an elected yet corrupt and reactionary Democrat government, this in order to restore to power the Republican People's Party (RPP), Kemal Ataturk's old movement. Then in March 1971, the army - anxious about economic debility, campus violence and widespread terrorism - returned to the political arena. This time, it was to throw the Justice Party out of office, thereby paving the way for an 'above party' administration under Dr Nihat Erim - a law professor with a RPP background. The Justice Party could fairly be described as the main successor to the Democrats. Alas, this is essentially because it, too, studiously exploited the conservative Islamic sentiments of the peasant masses.

Dr Erim was energetic for social reform. But he was no less zealous in joining with the army to stamp out terroristic extremism and, one might add, the political sub-cultures in which it had been nurtured. So by the autumn of 1973, the internal situation was so tranquil that general elections could again be held. However, the upshot of these was an uneasy coalition between the RPP and the National Salvation Party, a puritan Islamic revivalist movement. Through its sheer ruthlessness, the invasion of
Cyprus in 1974 showed itself to owe much to a classic reflex: recourse to foreign adventurism to salve internal unity.

In September 1980, the army again usurped the reins of power from the Justice Party. One reason was that successive governments had failed to secure the needful economic breakthrough. But of more immediate concern was the fact that, despite 20 provinces being under martial law, about 60 people were being killed per week by sectarian (Sunni versus Shi'a) or political terrorism. So then martial law was formally extended across the whole country. Among the collateral measures was the detention of 30,000 people.

Clearly reflected in each of these coups is the Turkish Army's interpretation of its basic political duty: to eschew direct rule by itself but so to wield its immense influence as to ensure that the parliamentary system remains not only efficient but progressive. Related to this perception of role are its broader functions as a school for the nation as well as an instrument of its material improvement - e.g. through road building and reafforestation.

Yet of late doubts have been more widely raised (not least in the USA and Western Europe) as to whether this singular essay in monitored democracy can be maintained. One source of added tension has been the propensity of Syria and of certain East European regimes to give arms and other assistance to the extreme Left in Turkey. Another is the mushrooming of a milieu for the extreme Left in the form of new universities and, more fundamentally, of urban slums. The proportion of the total population living in towns larger than 10,000 grew from 18 per cent in 1945 to 34 in 1970 and may soon pass 50. Accordingly, the recurrent campaigns against terrorism have been largely city-focussed, with the result that the liberal urban elites have been much discomfited by the spin-off effects. Unfortunately, however, the self-image of the military just referred to has customarily rested on its sharing with these same elites the goal of Westernisation.

The disintegrative turmoil in recent years within the RPP has been one manifestation of this contradiction. A more particular one is that, though terrorism is once again curbed and the economy seems on the mend, the form of democracy restored in 1982 is a depressingly circumscribed
Martial law remains. The President till 1989, General Keman Evren, has wide powers. None of the 600 members of the pre-1980 parliament was allowed to stand for re-election. Only three newly-fashioned parties were allowed to field candidates at all. Nevertheless, many Western commentators were to read true democratic vitality and sophistication into the fact that victory went to the grouping the general staff favoured least: the Motherland Party under Turqut Ozal, a man with a proven flair for macro-economic management.

Turkey merits a relatively extended discussion because in size, population and economic development it is not untypical of a middle range of countries that harbour democratic aspirations, not least among them Egypt. Conversely, however, its 48 million people are dwarfed by the 700 million of India. But, alas, the latter's survival as a democracy is likewise far from assured. To put matters in a nutshell, this is because various aspects of her economic and social development may not be keeping pace with the rising aspirations of her citizenry.

Thus the considerable economic growth being registered has done too little to narrow regional differences or to close a glaring gap between rich and poor throughout the country. The urban implosion has perennially looked menacing, notwithstanding some worthwhile advances in big city management this last decade or so. At the other end of the environmental spectrum, the destruction of the rain forests, which have traditionally afforded the aesthetic (and, to some extent, the material) setting for village life, proceeds at an alarming rate. The forested proportion of India's total landscape has fallen from just over 30 per cent in 1945 to 10 per cent today.67

Meanwhile, the influence of farmers and landowners within the main political parties (not least Congress) precludes the adequate taxation of their side of agriculture. Massive tax evasion by the upper classes has combined with a vast extension of official bureaucracies to imbalance budgets repeatedly. Corruption has become rife, and police brutality disturbingly widespread. The influence of caste is proving hard to eradicate, partly because 'the material relations between the castes vary kaleidoscopically' from
place to place. The position of women still leaves an awful lot to be desired, not least in their relationship with the forces of law and order. Granted, problems that have cumulatively been as grave as these have been coped with by many other polities at different times. But it has to be said that confidence that Indian democracy can surmount them is diminished by the way the political climate at national level has deteriorated, particularly since 1975, in terms of expediency, factionalism and a lack of higher purpose. The dip down effectively began that June with the Allahabad High Court finding Indira Gandhi guilty on charges of electoral corruption that seemed asininely petty in relation to the invalidation and six-year electoral ban then notionally imposed on her. Even allowing for this, however, the State of Emergency she introduced a fortnight later was implemented harshly, as witness the thousands of people held without trial.

Her defeat in the March 1977 election was clearly a reaction against that situation and the official irregularities it gave cover to. However, the incoming Janata administration (under the octogenarian Morarji Desai) was to be so ridden with rivalries as to be utterly incapable of getting to grips with the key issues of economic advance and internal order. Hence Mrs Gandhi's comeback in the election held late in 1979.

Today, the structural weaknesses of the country remain; and are only too liable to be expressed and perpetuated through communal tension and violence, as witness the current unrest in a Punjab that one had assumed had been rendered content by the great benefits it had derived from the 'Green Revolution' in agriculture. Fifteen years or so ago, the fear was the India would actually disintegrate. Today, the proximate risk is that the centrifugal tendencies will be constrained by a combination of New Delhi authoritarianism and Hindu chauvinism, these being underwritten by a closer relationship with the USSR.

Still, to allude to a Soviet forward role in relation to India is surely to highlight the reality that the most fundamental issue is not this. Rather it lies in the developmental problems of India herself and, of course, of the rest of the subcontinent. Yet what is so obviously true
there is essentially as true throughout the whole of Near East Major. To put the argument no higher, if the smooth and balanced development of this region cannot be assured, then no strategy of curbing Muscovite encroachments within it is likely to prove successful or even manageable. For Near East Major is worse than the pre-1914 Balkans in terms of the complexity of its political and social geography. Moreover, it is far worse than the latter was in terms of the stresses and contradictions induced by economic and cultural change.

IV

AN UNBREAKABLE NUCLEAR STALEMATE

Twenty to twenty-five years ago, a common practice was to divide the political or strategic geography of the world on the basis of there being essentially two kinds of territories. On the one hand, there were various major countries or alliances that had been or were being consolidated; and on the other, there were said to be the zones of fragmentation and instability ('shatter belts' was one description), across which the more solid polities spread their influence, in interaction with one another. South-East Asia and what has just been identified as Near East Major were usually seen as the prime shatter belts.

Today, however, we tend to see regional differences as being, in these terms, ones of degree rather than kind. All else apart, there are manifold economic and societal stresses that evidently affect everywhere. None the less, there is one strictly military respect in which the situation has, in the judgement of not a few of us, evolved from dynamic instability to profoundly stable equilibrium. This is that each Superpower now possesses - and can indefinitely retain - the capacity to inflict utterly unendurable damage on its chief rival under any conceivable circumstances. No longer can neither seriously expect ever to gain or regain a commanding nuclear ascendancy over the other, whether via a qualitative breakthrough in relevant areas of weapons technology or through a surge in the production of existing weapons. By the same token,
neither can hope effectively to disarm its main opponent by means of a sudden strategic attack, either now or in the foreseeable future.

Ever since the late 1960s, in fact, the USSR and the USA have been in a state of deadlock in regard to what has been termed 'central war': the delivery of nuclear warheads against their respective continental heartlands. Naturally, quantitative or qualitative change can, and indubitably will, alter this deadlock's appearance from time to time. What it can no longer do is break it. No matter what talk may still be heard in Washington or Moscow about a presumed possibility of gaining (regaining in the US case) 'strategic superiority' or, of course, a correlative danger of conceding it to the other side.

Many analysts would say, in fact, that these days the biggest impediment to a disarming strategic strike is that afforded by the mobility at sea, coupled with high immunity from detection, of the many Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) submarines possessed by each Superpower. Nor can this opinion be invalidated merely by reference to the ultimate ascendancy of Anti-Submarine Warfare in certain previous campaigns, most notably the Battle of the Atlantic (1939-45). All else apart, an FBM flotilla is not concerned, unlike the U-Boats of World War Two, with closing to action with enemy vessels. Instead, its duty is to avoid them, in which aim it may be greatly assisted by the special attributes its boats derive from nuclear propulsion and from the novel hull designs associated with this.

Obversely, the progress in submarine detection achieved since 1945 has been decidedly modest in relation to the huge investments made in the relevant areas of research and development. Nor is this very surprising. For bearing in mind the distances typically involved in sea surveillance, one has to say that active scanning by means of wave energy radiating from a point source (which is what every sensor effectively is) will always be especially severely constrained by the inverse square law: a geometric truism which says that, because of radial divergence, the intensity with which radiation impacts on any surface transverse to it will be inversely proportional to the square of the distance that radiation has travelled.
Naturally, this law operates not only during a pulse's outward journey but again throughout its return after reflection. In other words, if the range is trebled, let us say, the diminution due to geometry alone is three raised to the fourth power - i.e. by 80 parts in 81.

With passive sensing, the mode that depends on the heat or sound energy inadvertently emitted by a target submarine, there is no return journey to compound the impact of the square law. But the original emission may lack strength and definition.

Added to all of which are absorption, diffusion and refraction. Sea water very readily absorbs or diffuses sound energy, while the endless variations within it of salinity and temperature (not to mention air bubbles) cause much refraction. What is more, electromagnetic energy (light, radio waves etc.) scarcely penetrates the oceans at all, except at Very or Extremely Low Frequencies (VLF or ELF); and across this part of the spectrum, wavelengths are so long (10,000 metres or more) that perceiving objects as small as submarines is more or less impossible. Related to this is the difficulty of discriminating between a reflection from an adversary FBM and those from other submarines or, of course, a myriad of other objects.

So what are the operational implications? Let it be said to start with that little heed should be paid to occasional averrations that infra-red sensors, mounted in planes or orbiting satellites, may detect and interpret the small and highly localised rise in the temperature of the sea surface that may be induced by the rapid transit of a nuclear-driven submarine perhaps 25 fathoms below. What if the boat in question is proceeding only slowly and maybe down at 250 fathoms or even lower? What if it glides beneath an ice sheet? How might positive identification be effected, in any case? How quickly could analysts obtain and interpret the data gleaned?

Turning to acoustic surveillance, on the other hand, one finds that the scope for the passive mode is much greater. For one thing, the interpretation of all kinds of sound emission through water is starting to benefit markedly from the application of computer analysis. Meanwhile, the active pulsing of sound waves to be ref-
lected back has steadily become more proficient. Even so, the mean range of positive discrimination of a hostile boat is not dramatically greater by either acoustic method than was the case in 1945.

Besides, it cannot be just a matter of a viability or otherwise of particular lines of ASW development. It is also a question of the colossal scale of the improvement that would be required all round in order to match up to a plausible scenario for a near-total disarming blow. After all, even in May 1943 - a month of decisive victory for the Allied escort forces on North Atlantic stations - the average attrition of the U-Boat fleet at sea was barely 1.0 per cent per day. Yet a pre-emptive first-strike against an FBM flotilla would have to achieve close to 100 per cent in something like a quarter of an hour: a required advance in performance of the order of 10,000 times. Nor should one forget that a nuclear-propelled submarine of today is far superior to any diesel-electric model in respect of speed, manoeuvrability, and - above all - underwater endurance. Nor that oceans like the Pacific or the Atlantic (to say nothing of the Arctic) give an FBM flotilla immense scope for dispersion in obscure locations.

But what of communication in crisis? If one insists that, in a nuclear confrontation, a submarine would not dare even push a wireless aerial above the surface, the only means of long-distance communication with it must become VLF or ELF radio. Yet this is essentially reliant on purpose-built and very high-powered transmitters vulnerably located on fixed land sites, though the US TACAMO programme does also employ a few C-130 Hercules aircraft as mobile relay stations. What is more, the general tendency - until recently, at any rate - has been to regard VLF and ELF as 'solely the means to alert ballistic missile submarines at the commencement of strategic nuclear war'.

So command and control could be a major bottleneck in respect of the gradual or selective release of strategic missiles by submarines. Still, too heavy weather can be made of it in the peculiarly primitive context of a full-scale second strike. Granted, a ballistic-missile submarine that was being closely hunted beforehand might have had to rely on data transmission to facilitate its evasion. But the advice and instructions such a vessel would need in connection with the actual release of all its strategic
weapons against pre-determined urban centres would, in fact, be quite limited in volume and simple in character. Nor does one have to accept, even in regard to a very general nuclear exchange between the two Superpowers, that it would be impracticable for a submarine on patrol ever to protrude an aerial. And although, as and when it did so, the prospects of full communication with its home territory might not be assured, they would be much improved.

But the other query to raise concerns asymmetry. To be more precise, it concerns the fact that, for a variety of reasons, the Soviet FBM force appears rather more vulnerable than does the American. Thus its egress to the open sea is through channels that are peculiarly constricted. The most important of these fan out from the vicinity of Murmansk and from the Vladivostok area.

The former can be closely screened by various NATO forces. The latter can be watched by the United States Navy and - perhaps to an increasing extent - the Japanese naval and air arms. Indeed, Yasahiro Nakasone, Japan's forceful Prime Minister, has lately talked of his navy's 'bottling up Soviet naval forces' in the event of war, this by blockading the Straits of Tsushima; and also of its escorting American ships that are assisting his country's defence.\textsuperscript{72} Obversely, a Soviet sense of geographical constriction in that crucial theatre may have helped to produce the overreactiveness that resulted in the destruction of the Korean airliner in September 1982.

Then again, the number of Soviet vessels regularly at sea has always been low to date. As of mid-1983, the USSR's flotilla of FBMs comprised 80 boats. However, only one in eight of these is on patrol in normal peacetime circumstances; and, at a given time, most of them are likely not to be so very far from Soviet shores. Moreover, each one will tend to be noisy relative to similar vessels operated by the West.

Still, the first of the much superior Typhoon-class boats has entered service and others will soon follow, thereby permitting more extensive patterns of deployment. Meanwhile, even as things stand today, the overall vulnerability of the Soviet FBM flotilla is diminished by the ease with which its members on patrol may proceed under the
polar sheet of pack-ice. Nor should we forget that the proportion of this fleet that was on station would rise during a time of high tension.

Besides, any operational disadvantages this FBM flotilla labours under at present are offset by the USSR's numerical preponderance, this in respect not only of Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) but also of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) deployed on land. She currently operates 1000 of the former and 1400 of the latter. The corresponding figures for the USA are 575 and 1050. Thanks to the now regular fittings of multiple warheads in a missile capsule as well as to the continued use of limited numbers of strategic bombers, each Superpower has more than 6000 strategic warheads deployed.

However, these several figures have to be assessed in relation to what might represent an utterly unacceptable level of retaliatory damage, as inflicted by one Superpower on the other. When, a quarter of a century ago, these morbid matters first emerged as subjects of analysis, it came widely to be accepted that this stipulation would be most adequately met by the destruction of more or less every urban area with a population in excess of 100,000. Admittedly, only a minority of each national population inhabited such towns or cities. But that minority invariably included a high proportion of the various elites. Correspondingly, the localities in question collectively played an absolutely crucial part in the formulation of all aspects of national policy; the operation of the transport system; the provision of scholastic education; electronic communication; cultural creativity; and so on. Conceivably, a comprehensive civil defence might preserve a proportion of their inhabitants, always assuming that the launching of a mass strike had been anticipated well in advance. But the attrition and dislocation of the material infrastructure would, in itself, be utterly crippling in national terms.

Yet a 1963 Washington estimate was that a mere 370 places were above the threshold of 100,000 inhabitants in the whole of what was still being seen as the 'Sino-Soviet bloc'; and the corresponding figure for the Western alliance was of much the same order. Therefore, several hundred nuclear warheads could have sufficed to reduce not just the
USA or the USSR but all of their regional allies to a state of inchoate desolation. Evidently, much the same would apply in 1984 and for an indefinite time ahead.

From which it ineluctably follows that each of the FBM flotillas here alluded to is now and will remain able, unaided and under all circumstances, to direct enough strategic missiles against the homeland of the other Superpower to destroy it to all intents and purposes. In short, a 'balance of terror' rooted in the prospect of 'mutual assured destruction' can be preserved by sea-based deterrence alone.

So must the inference be that the ICBMs are superfluous? The answer should probably be 'No. It does not quite mean this'. For one thing, FBM boats are not well suited to the sort of selective and slow-motion strategic nuclear exchange that could proceed awhile if, say, a Limited World War had slid out of control. It is a lack of suitability which is partly due to the command-and-control difficulties. However, it derives still more fundamentally from the reality that if an FBM releases one or two of its missiles, it ipso facto reveals the current location of all the rest. Rapid transit on the part of the boat itself may offset this weakness considerably. But it will not always nullify it.

Nor can one ignore the axiom that deterrence is about perception as well as reality. Therefore, account must be taken of the plain fact that, thus far at any rate, many people the world over continue to find incredible the proposition that a Superpower can provide itself with a totally reliable second strike by means of submarines or any other particular kind of weapon system. In other words, awareness of the objective considerations adumbrated above has not yet become sufficient to outweigh the persisting influence of the time-honoured adage that every weapon has its antidote. Accordingly, one has to ask how immune from a blanket attack would be those second-strike capabilities that are afforded by the respective echelons of ICBMs.

Sheer numerical strength allows a most positive reply to be given in the Soviet case. As regards the American, however, most analysts currently concede that a single strike by a substantial part of the adversary echelon, sometime in the late 1980s, could knock out some 85 per cent of US ICBMs. Yet even as things stand today, that would still leave intact enough US launchers and warheads
to obliterate over 300 targets in the USSR. Needless to say, too, the partial replacement of Minuteman by MX will tend to increase the likely residual level.

Obversely, the statistical probabilities involved in targeting are such that, whatever kind of warfare is being envisaged, it becomes ever harder to raise single-salvo attrition rates from 85, to cite that figure again, towards 100 per cent. To give a hypothetical but by no means bizarre illustration: it might take x shots to give a guarantee of 85 per cent; 2x, one of 90, then 20x, one of 95; and 500x, one of 98. In other words, the probability curves trend away to what the mathematicians call 'asymtotic limits'.

But what of a more radical departure: the interception of incoming missiles? As will readily be recalled, for some five or ten years after the launching of Sputnik in 1957, a lot of enthusiasm was evinced in Washington and - even more particularly - in Moscow about the prospects for a comprehensive defence of the national territory by means of Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs): weapons fired from the surface in order to destroy the warhead capsules of offensive strategic missiles, during their descent to earth. Within a few years, however, it came to be accepted on virtually all sides that the inherent limitations of ABMs were such that they could only effectively be used to protect clusters of hardened ICBM sites plus their hardened control posts or perhaps (in a different mode) for nationwide defence against an attack far less heavy and perhaps far less sophisticated than what the other Superpowers could now launch.

Now, however, a fresh approach is being explored. It is Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) by means of 'directed energy' weapons based in Space. By 'directed energy' is meant either laser beams or else beams composed of sub-nuclear particles.

In assessing such proposals, it is imperative to address the loose talk lately to be heard about the 'strategic importance of Space'. Nobody would deny, of course, that 'near Space' has assumed enormous significance as a milieu for the overhead surveillance that is so crucial for strategic assessment and nuclear targeting. Nor that it is also of great importance as a medium through which to relay radio or even radar signals. However, such simple truths
have sometimes been so stretched as to suggest that this all but airless zone could actually constitute the decisive battlefield in a strategic nuclear exchange. Indeed, Space is not infrequently extolled as the 'High Frontier', the key not just to military dominance but to solving the population explosion.73

Allowance has to be made for this rhetorical ambience, above all when one is judging the import of President Reagan's announcement of March 1983 to the effect that the United States would press ahead more urgently with research on space-based BMD. What this must mean, more specifically, is that the standard tests of operational viability will be applied with more than the usual stringency. Could such a canopy actually add anything significant to the already impressive survival prospects, even in the face of a sudden and heavy attack, of the US capacity for massive retaliation? Might it ever be able to shield at all adequately society at large? Above all, could it conceivably cost no more to create and maintain than the USSR would have to expend to negate it?

Placing weapons beyond the confines of the Earth is subject to three ineluctable drawbacks. One is that no blast effect can be registered in a virtual vacuum. The second is that external control becomes more difficult. The third is added costs.

On the other hand, there are two big attractions. The one is that even from 100 miles up, the horizon is nearly 1000 miles away, which means inter alia that strategic offensive rockets may be engaged during their ascent phase. Evidently, the other is the absence of atmospheric scattering or absorption. This is of great benefit vis-a-vis the utilisation of streams of sub-atomic particles as well as of emissions within the electromagnetic spectrum. At which point, it may be germane to note that the individual parcels of energy within an electromagnetic wave are known as photons; and the size of each photon is directly proportional to the intervals between succeeding waves (i.e. the wavelengths).

What exo-atmospheric operation cannot mean, however, is that beam weapons (either particle or electromagnetic) can be made effective across any distance. All else apart, one consequence of the Uncertainty Principle in physics is that any form of radiation is bound to spread out: its
degree of divergence being directly proportional to its own wavelength, though inversely proportional to the diameter of the projector being used. The result is a progressive decrease in beam intensity with range.

Perhaps one should here stress that beams of particles are not exempt from this natural law. On the contrary, in realms so peculiarly minute, particles behave like waves just as waves behave like particles. Furthermore, a stream of sub-atomic particles (electrons or whatever) is almost impossible to produce except as a reaction against an electrical field. So not only will each and every one carry an electrical charge but, within a beam of a given kind, these charges will be either all positive or else all negative. Yet this must mean that they will all repel one another, thereby increasing markedly their angular spread.

Accordingly, the development engineers are currently being forced back to the use of electromagnetic radiation to produce lethal concentrations of heat as photons are absorbed by a target. Moreover, it is clear that no such solution can be at all feasible unless the wavelengths employed are uniformly about as short as those of visible light; and this involves their being generated by lasers. What a laser does, in fact, is to make innumerable electrons 'jump' from one level of activity to a lesser one. For every adjustment thus made, an equivalent photon of energy will be released. Within a given lasering process, all these photons will be of the same size and grouped into waves at constant intervals.

In any case, feasibility is not the same thing as meeting the exacting canons of cost-benefit analysis. Suppose one makes studiedly sanguine assumptions about the power of the generators likely to be borne on laser battle-stations; about how wide the laser projectors themselves might be; and, above all, about the resistance to concentrated heat of ascending enemy rockets. Even then, it is terribly hard to reckon up an orbit network of BMD, reliant on the lasering of visible light, without making it cost several (and perhaps many) times as much to create and sustain as the Soviets might spend on constructing enough extra missiles to swamp it.

To correct this imbalance, it would be necessary to develop lasers yielding waves of about X-ray length and hence less liable to lose concentration across a given
distance. However, to progress - in an operational context - to wavelengths as short as that would be to make a big and very difficult quantum jump. This is because one would have to dislodge electrons orbiting much closer to the nuclei of their respective atoms than is usually the case at the moment. 75

Such an advance cannot possibly be registered in the BMD battle stations President Reagan believes could be in Earth orbit before the turn of the century. At best, it would be manifest in a second generation, from about the year 2010. Yet there are strong grounds for believing that, by then, the USSR will have narrowed or eliminated its lag in many branches of electronics; and will also have developed long-range cruise missiles or other kinds of strategic offensive weapons. Meanwhile, it will almost certainly enhance its capability for intercepting Space vehicles in low orbit. Any BMD station will be inherently more vulnerable than any ascending rocket.

Among other operational aspects which cannot now be explored include the problem of beam steering, and the susceptibility to interference of the wireless links between the surface and the battle stations. Neither of them are at all helpful to space-based BMD. Then in the broader political context (which cannot, after all, be ignored), there are the negative implications for arms control agreements, past and future; and, more basically, for reinforcing 'garrison-state' syndromes within each Superpower.

Therefore, there are not here grounds at all sufficient to revise the verdict that, though further innovation and deployment may complicate morbidly the strategic nuclear stalemate between the Superpowers, they hold out no promise of overturning it in either direction. So for this reason alone, the analogies sometimes drawn with the deterrence reciprocally proffered in 1914 by the British and German battle fleets is invalid. Winston Churchill said that the commander on the British side, at any rate, could lose the war in an afternoon. Nobody in Washington or Moscow today faces a prospect remotely equivalent.
In other respects, however, the global arms balance is becoming more unstable. Attention was drawn in Chapter 3(a) to how ominously the threat of nuclear proliferation looms in Near East Major. Nor is it absent elsewhere.

Account must be taken, too, of the likelihood that the accelerating revolution in electronics will favour offensive action in general and surprise attack in particular: this in non-nuclear mechanised warfare, notably in the all-important European theatre. Then again, the USSR’s emergence as a maritime rival of the USA on the global plane has disturbing connotations. Not least is one reminded of the febrile arms races at sea between the British Empire and Germany before 1914 and then, several years later within the Pacific, between the USA and Japan.

All the same, there must be much significance in the way what is sometimes called the central arms balance (i.e. the strategic nuclear one between Washington and Moscow) has evolved to stability. Even so, this significance may be more ambiguous and contingent than has lately been recognised. Thus while nuclear stalemate has provided a solid basis for a sustained dialogue between the Superpowers on strategic arms control, this has yet to lead either to a comprehensive freeze of their two panoplies or to actual cutbacks in any constituents thereof.

Besides, we do well not to forget that twenty to twenty-five years ago apprehension was widely evinced, not least within Democrat circles in the United States, lest the impending disappearance of a pre-existing US margin of strategic superiority encouraged the Russians to be less inhibited about conducting local probing actions. Moreover, their ability to coordinate some such forceful strategy was seen as assured by (a) the essentially monolithic character of their polity and, presumptively, of the entire ‘Sino-Soviet bloc’ and (b) the geostrategic centrality of their own North Eurasian heartland.

Thus General Maxwell Taylor wrote in 1959 that in the years immediately ahead the Russians, blessed with what he and others foresaw as an actual superiority in strategic missiles ‘may be expected to press harder than ever
before... They will not believe, nor will our friends, that we will use our massive retaliatory forces for any purpose other than our own survival." Around that time, too, Sir Basil Liddell Hart was warning from Britain that 'Nuclear nullity', as he called it, 'inherently favours and fosters a renewal of non-nuclear aggressive activity'.

Presumably, both men would have seen the invasion of Afghanistan as delayed confirmation of their fears. At all events, the impression thus made on him by these two scholarly, and by no means illiberal, students of strategy was a mainspring behind President Kennedy's drive to build up American and allied 'conventional war' capability. Indeed, General Taylor was to serve in his 'New Frontier' administration, first as presidential adviser and then as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

If their apprehensions are further borne out in the years ahead, this will probably be because the adversary embroilment of the Superpowers in a localised conflict somewhere or other has caused their global relationship to slide towards a condition of Limited World War. Thankfully, this geostrategic gambit is not in evidence in 1984 except in the vague sense that there will almost inevitably be some interplay between the political tensions over, say, Nicaragua and those over, say, nuclear modernisation in Europe. No doubt, uncertainties in the Kremlin about the leadership situation help to explain the absence of anything worse.

At other times, however, the interaction here alluded to has been sharpened and has appeared more calculated. Almost certainly, for instance, there was a causal connection between the war in Vietnam and intensified skirmishing along the 1953 armistice line in Korea, in 1967 and again in 1968. Nor is it inconceivable that a wish to divert American attention from Vietnam lay behind the curious machinations by the USSR apropos of the Arab-Israel conflict in May of the former year, though this is not to say it sought the all-out war which resulted from its propagating in Cairo and Damascus the fiction that Israel was preparing for a massive attack on Syria.

Nor does the USSR appear unaware of the hostage connotations of the Western European appendage of Eurasia. One overt, even if token, case in point was Bulganin's warning, towards the close of the Suez campaign in 1956,
about rockets being fired at London and Paris. Similarly during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Khruschev alluded to a possible Soviet invasion of Turkey, then a staunch ally of the USA. Meanwhile, plans were laid in several capitals lest coercive action was taken against West Berlin. Likewise, the physical albeit non-violent pressures applied to that city during the early months of both 1965 and 1968 were ominously coincident with sharp escalations of the Vietnam conflict, no matter that the given reasons were couched in terms of the local situation. 81

Finally, one may take an example on the benign side. In October 1979, the USSR, announced the unilateral removal of 20,000 troops and 1,000 tanks from East Germany: an initiative that involved a reduction from 20 to 19 in the number of Soviet divisions in the country, this being the first time the said order of battle had altered either way in a quarter of a century.

What all this reminds one of is not so much the 1914 pattern as an Eighteenth Century one. For a century, from about 1675, a number of contemporary factors (refined techniques of defensive warfare; reliance on professional armies; and diminished sectarian fanaticism) tended to cause European land campaigns to be fought for limited territorial objectives. Yet at the same time, the progressive extension (often at one another's expense) of the European sea-based empires made it ever more feasible to generate global strategies for the waging of conflict. This new dimension was epitomised by Britain's Pitt the Elder when he quipped, during the Seven Years' War, that Canada could be won on the plains of Germany. Suffice to add that in Chapter 5 of Book VIII of his History of the English-Speaking Peoples (Cassell, 1957), Winston Churchill entitles this conflict 'The First World War'.

To pursue this comparison, however, is to lead oneself to inferences that are not entirely reassuring. One stems from the simple truth that whatever generalisations are made about the eighteenth or any other century do not apply to all situations or, indeed, every personality. In fact, some of the military commanders the era in question knew (most notably, perhaps, Charles XII of Sweden) were veritably boundless in their campaign strategies. It is a caveat which may serve to remind us that a Limited World War could involve armed confrontation or, indeed, fierce
conflict in widely separated theatres: the Norwegian Sea, the Persian Gulf, Korea or wherever. In other words, it might escalate well beyond the restrained ripostes referred to above, even if not to the employment of strategic nuclear weapons.

Another aspect is that, from the middle of the Seventeenth Century to the late Eighteenth, many people (starting with Colbert in France and the Mercantilists in England) had a strongly developed sense of the way imperial trade could underpin both the industrial and the fiscal bases for war. Thus did they evince, according to the lights of their time, a more urgent awareness of the economic foundations of Grand Strategy than perhaps we achieve today.

Moreover, such an awareness visibly persisted through the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras. From then on, however, it waned. This was partly because one country - namely, Britain - was commercially so dominant. It was also because the emergent economic philosophy of that country - international free trade - was seen more as an alternative to military confrontation than as a foundation for it. Meanwhile, the insularity of the British Isles was continuing to afford them a high degree of immunity from the kind of outside intervention in their internal affairs which, especially in an era of rapid cultural change, may all too readily produce a destructive polarisation of the domestic political scene.

The legacy has been a tradition of strategic thought which has little inclination properly to encompass economics or other civil areas. Granted, the growth of the British Empire was always guided in some measure by a desire to safeguard trade and secure access. True also that, in neither of the two world wars which overshadow the first half of this century, was the United Kingdom slow to perceive the counter-economic, not to say the counter-societal, potentialities of naval blockade and strategic bombing. Even so, modern Britain has rarely been imbued with the sense that war is an all-embracing phenomenon, a sense which has informed certain predatory regimes in continental Europe. What is more, everything that thus relates to the offshore insularity of Britain applies with added force vis-à-vis the continental insularity of North America and Australia.
Yet the fact of the matter is that, since 1945, what we have come to know as 'strategic studies' has been heavily dominated by American, British and (in no small measure) Australian thinkers. Hence it has tended to limit its ambit to military science, crisis diplomacy and arms control: a tendency that has perforce been accentuated by the macabre novelty of the nuclear enigma. True, the subject has also enjoyed a distinguished input from France. But this has usually been constrained to address matters nuclear even more particularly, in view of there being a national nuclear question.

To my mind, a striking example of the resultant blind-spot in regard to the economics dimension in Grand Strategy was afforded from within Near East Major by the closure of the Suez Canal from June 1967 until June 1975. For although this situation put a grave incremental strain on the always fragile economies of countries like Pakistan and India, there was a disposition to discuss the strategic implications exclusively in terms of the way it inhibited the movement of Soviet warships and supply vessels between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

This dichotomy has often occurred, too, in popular discussion of global affairs. A decade or so ago, it was frequently being said that, whereas in the 1950s the prime threat to Mankind came from the nuclear bomb, it would henceforward come from pressure on economic resources. Today there is a tendency, not least in the same leftist circles, to seek a resolution of the nuclear arms race without reference to other ambient factors: political, economic, social and ecological. Yet only brief reflection reveals linkages between these several considerations. To put the point at its starkest, a nuclear war could yet be the process whereby the human race, or a large portion of it, effects a 'population crash' comparable with those which, say the zoologists, occasionally terminate phases of rapid growth in other branches of the animal kingdom.

A current example of this circumscription is to be observed on each side of the debate about the nuclear threshold in Europe. The form it takes is a failure to bear in mind that virtually any actual warfare, say one or two days' fighting at brigade or even battalion level, could have economic as well as political ramifications that might have a catastrophic effect on our global civilisation.
One of many reasons for apprehending this is the high degree of financial interdependence that obtains today between the West and the Soviet bloc. By this is meant, above all else, the fact that scores of billions of dollars are owed by the latter to the former. For the state of the international monetary system is so fragile and bizarre that creditors stand considerably exposed to ruthless behaviour by big debtors, not least when the latter are good Leninists with dirigiste economies and ideological justifications for debt renunciation. After all, just one act of reneging on debt could trigger a whole succession of others all round the world. In short, NATO's overriding concern has to be the deterrence of conflict by all possible means, nuclear weapons included.

Still, to have Economics play a more integral part in Strategy could be to begin a process whereby the latter becomes much more widely cast. Thus to interpret the invasion of Afghanistan in terms of the Victor Louis allegory is to enter the realms not just of Economics pure and simple but of cultural evolution.

Perhaps a precursor of this wider casting is to be seen with Zbigniew Brzezinski (later to be the National Security Adviser to President Carter) writing in 1972 of the contrast between the 'international and planetary' outlooks, intimating a need for national leaders guided by new concepts able to weld the two together (see Chapter 1). However, he came across as a bit too aware of the more negative, anarchic and futile aspects of the 'planetary' perspective. No doubt this related to his perennial preoccupation with the containment of Soviet Communism, as witness his immediate and fulsome endorsement of the intervention in Grenada in October 1983.

Some broad movement towards a rightful fusion of the international and planetary was evident in the aspirations and policies of the Kennedy administration. With singular zest did it affirm that the United States must resume the leadership of the Free World. Every aspect of military capability was improved. A commitment was made to beat the Russians to the Moon. At the same time, however, fresh attention was paid to overseas economic development. A Peace Corps was established. So was an Arms Control
and Disarmament Agency. Even such domestic aims as civil rights and urban renewal were seen as enhancing the prestige of the USA and hence its influence in the world.

Undeniably, the cool but sanguine rationalism of this 'New Frontier' captured popular imagination abroad no less than at home. Yet it did have serious flaws. The first to mention, never mind the disclaimers, was a belief that there was an American solution to every problem. Another was a conviction that this could always be arrived at through intellectual analysis. From these traits arose a tendency on the part of the New Frontiersmen to regard expressions of dissent by foreign governments - allied or otherwise - as mere atavism, while expecting their own formulations to be received as the products of unsullied reason.

Inevitably, this lordly disdain by 'the best and the brightest' had specific adverse consequences in the field of international security. Among them was a failure to work out an adequate (meaning, above all, a sufficiently non-military) doctrine of counter-insurgency. So, too, was omitting to address, during what might have been propitious years, a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. So again was a failure to come properly to terms with the rising tide of Gaullism in Europe or to explore what opportunities might be presented by its mirror image: Maoism in China.

What then may be the prospects of the West as a whole now formulating a Grand Strategy that repairs such omissions and biases? How feasible is it to fuse the international and the planetary perceptions, the geopolitical and the ecological perspectives?

The answer can only be that the task is more difficult now. Cultural evolution proceeds apace but unpredictably, impelled by a communications revolution that is still being appraised. Meanwhile, economic stress as such is more severe in many respects, thereby making it that much harder to demonstrate to Western electorates a positive relationship between long-term national and global needs and their immediate personal aspirations. What is more, the sheer diplomacy of interdependence has become more complex, not least because of the economic emergence of Japan. Besides, public opinion throughout the West had
lately appeared less willing to accept the prerogatives and presumptions of government, this partly in delayed reaction against the macho charisma of the Kennedys.

Nor is the said task made any easier by shortfalls in conceptualisation. Thus it is all very well talking about bringing Economics suitably within the purview of Grand Strategy. But the plain fact is that the manifold world crisis has lately thrown the former subject into a state of turmoil, in regard to the structural weaknesses both of highly developed nations and of newly developing ones, to say nothing of relations between them. Let us take Keynesian economic theory. Twenty to twenty-five years ago, this was on the crest of a wave throughout the Western World. Even such Marxist analysts as the late John Strachey in Britain had conceded that its esoteric logic could be applied unerringly to the economic systems of the advanced nations. Yet today dissatisfaction is massively burgeoning with a theory that has inter alia steered us clear, thus far at any rate, of financial crashes à la Wall Street in 1929. As usual, the explanation is severalfold. Though always most anxious to portray himself as a dynamic analyst, ... Keynes had only the vaguest notions about changes through time. Nor did he address himself much to economic growth per se. Nor does expanding money supply look as efficacious as once it did as a means of inducing full employment. ...

Above all, Keynes was little concerned with fluctuations in price levels, an attitude interpreted by many of his disciples as positive endorsement of considerable and sustained rates of inflation. Nowadays, we are more conscious of the ease with which moderate inflation can slide into a headlong gallop.

In the nearby academic discipline of Development Economics, the certainties of twenty and thirty years ago have similarly vanished. We are less sure than we were of what the priorities should be in the development of Afro-Asian and Latin American societies; and we are more aware of the conflicts between the various aims. Thus economic growth as a source of social welfare; cultural evolution as a
function of economic growth; industrial development via import substitution; aid as a pump-primer for growth; centralised macro-planning; and ecological equilibrium are all more cloudy notions these days.

One issue that has long been contentious (as witness the great debate in 1967 between Robert Heilbroner and Dennis Wrong\(^4\)) is whether economic lift-off is best effected, in developing countries, through authoritarian institutions as opposed to democratic ones. Concerned as it must be with investment ratios, the spirit of innovation and social accountability, this question remains critical. However, it ought to be set more firmly within the context of inter-state relations and, indeed, 'planetary' evolution.

The view that democratisation is not only a needful but a feasible global objective was fervently projected by President Reagan when he addressed both houses of the Westminster parliament in June 1982. He averred that 'Wherever the comparisons have been made between free and closed societies, West Germany and East Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, Malaysia and Vietnam, it is the democratic countries that are prosperous and responsive to the needs of their people'. He continued,

Around the world today the democratic revolution is gathering new strength. In India, a critical test has been passed with the peaceful change of governing political parties. In Africa, Nigeria is moving in remarkable and unmistakable ways to build and strengthen its democratic institutions. In the Caribbean and Central America, 16 of 24 countries have freely elected governments.

Hence,

The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy, the system of free press, unions, political parties, and universities which allows a people to choose their own way, to develop their own culture, to reconcile their own differences through peaceful means.\(^5\)

Events in the South Atlantic and also the Levant denied this presentation the immediate impact it was meant to have. In the New Year, however, the President was to establish a government directorate to supervise public and
private efforts to advance democracy around the world. Also, funding was being sought for new programmes to be run by the State Department, the United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development. Likewise, such existing channels as Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty and the Voice of America were being encouraged to plan for expansion. During the rest of 1983 the impetus declined. But it may have been revived in June 1984 with the formulation, at the summit meeting of seven heads of leading Western governments, of the 'London Charter' of democratic values.

In the ultimate, the alternative to democratic evolution seems, in a modernising society, only to be a revolutionary mode of leadership afforded by a ramifying party machine imbued with a political religion which is most probably laced with socialist semantics yet charismatically geared to the life and recorded thoughts of some leading figure, deemed to personify a Rousseau-style 'general will'. Invariably, too, the armed services are well to the fore, although the professional cadres tend to be hedged in by militias and other paramilitary echelons and to be well penetrated by party cells.

At the same time, social and private life is thoroughly politicised, individuality being dismissed as mere affection. Authorised comment is suffused with themes of crisis and attack. Facts are subordinated to consciousness and the past to the future. As is shown by various phases in the history of both Communism and Fascism (above all, the Nazi era in Germany), this approach may for a while tap large wells of social energy, not least through its appeal to the more primitive aspects of group behaviour. In the final analysis, however, the 'planetary' crisis is too immense and intricate to be resolved by police states. For they too consistently turn out to be narrow, cynical, secretive, cantankerous, dissembling, corrupt and martial. Near East Major, in particular, provides many instances of such regimes, Left and Right and hybrid.

Not that the progress of liberal democracy is ipso facto assured. On the contrary, many factors work against it in today's tension-ridden world. Indeed, faith in this mode of government and way of life has not lately been all that strong in the West itself. Among the reasons is disen-
chantment among many of the young over what they see as a discordance between, on the one hand, the education they have received and the expectations they have had aroused and, on the other, the limited opportunities within modern society to pursue satisfying and secure careers or to participate at all adequately in the determination of public policies.

Nor is it easy for liberal democracy and related precepts (personal freedom; the unfettered rule of law; social and political pluralism; and, many would insist, the market economy) to thrive across the world at large. Against a background of crime waves within sovereign states and endless tensions between them, very many individuals and most regimes are strongly disposed to give top priority to the preservation of order and stability. True, it can well be argued that this object is more likely to be sustained in the longer term if economic and political progress can both continue. In the shorter term, however, that grand strategic perspective is liable to get crowded out in favour of what are seen as more urgent imperatives, witness the travails of the fragile democracies of Near East Major.

To my mind, the divergence here alluded to has been epitomised by the award of the 1983 Nobel Peace Prize to Lech Walesca. For the justification has been that Solidarity was working for the kind and degree of liberalisation that is basic to lasting peace. But the fear-stricken Polish authorities and their equally nerve-wracked Soviet backers have repeatedly declared that, if the 'enemies of socialism' were allowed to prevail then 'the stability of the European continent and, for that matter, the whole world would have been placed in jeopardy'. Something of a mirror-image of their attitude can be seen in the way Alexander Haig worried during the Falklands crisis, lest a defeat for the junta opened up Latin America to Communist influence.

Nor is there any point in pretending there are not real dilemmas here. After all, democratic societies are, virtually by definition, 'open' - i.e. ones in which people freely communicate. Yet that in its turn means that their state apparatus is relatively weak and circumscribed in relation to certain types of threat. Suppose, for example, the Lebanon were now rebuilt as a genuine democracy. In the longer term, this could be expected to siphon off the communal
impulses to violence. Yet in the shorter, it might give
terrorist groups still more scope to do their worst, espe­
cially against a background of inadequate border control.

Then again, there can be a very complicated relation­
ship between progress, be this economic or political, and
the popular expectations of same. To put things in a
nutshell, the former may raise the latter more than it
satisfies them. This is why rapid economic change has so
often destabilised the political scene, a classic example
being the unrest that swept Japan in the decade following
the Meiji restoration in 1868. More specifically, the economic
advance of pluralistic societies may accentuate internal
friction by bringing different ethnic or other groupings into
more abrasive contact. Nor can one overlook the truism that
autocracy may be at its most vulnerable when it is taking
the first steps towards openness and freedom. By 1914,
Austria-Hungary exemplified both tendencies too well to
stand any real chance of survival.

An added complication is the inherent impossibility of
gauging with any precision just how much progress towards
democracy has actually been made at a given place and
time. Twenty years ago, Rene Dumont was warning against
what he called 'South Americanisation': meaning inter alia
the reduction of multi-party democracy to - as he said was
the case with India - 'a very good caricature of itself', this
due to the lack of (a) a fully-fledged system of universal
education and (b) a sufficiency of economic development.89
Meanwhile, however, W. Arthur Lewis was castigating as a
logical and pragmatic absurdity a then quite fashionable
notion that participatory democracy could be sustained
within the context of a one-party state.90

Nor is there any very simple connection between the
advance of parliamentary democracy and the promotion of
the political precepts associated with it. Take, for example,
the rule of law. An essentially conservative student of
English history, Sir Arthur Bryant, has freely acknow­
ledged that a key reason why early Nineteenth Century
Britain was a relatively open society was that the populace
was ever poised to turn unruly should individual liberty
and privacy be threatened from on high. He quotes with
approval the reflection by an overseas visitor that this
'strange medley of licentiousness and legal restraint' approximated more nearly to 'natural law' than what obtained elsewhere.91

On the present world stage, the Nigerian national elections of 1983 appeared to many something of a case study of what may be looked for and hoped for, never mind their being negated within months by a military coup. True, the corruption endemic in that country's body politic was conspicuously evident in yet another huge inflation of the electoral roll and hardly less so in a good deal of wayward counting. None the less, the all-important presidential poll was conducted in admirable peace. The under-armed police force has been, for the most part, mercifully redundant at the booths. Politically ambitious soldiers, so far, remain politely tucked away in barracks... it seems that more Nigerians have voted than ever before. The press, wildly and virulently unobjective as ever, has none the less been unmistakably free. There are signs of an even greater achievement: more Nigerians are voting across tribal lines ... All three leading candidates on August 6th seem to have spread their appeal across a wider tribal range than ever before.92 (My emphasis.)

On the other hand, neither Nigeria or anywhere else has yet provided Black Africa with its first experience of incumbent rulers being peacefully ejected via the ballot box: excepting, of course, the swing to the radical Left in the election held in June 1982 in the mid-ocean island of Mauritius. Nor is what President Reagan epitomised as this 'critical test' of the toleration and pragmatism that form the very heart of the liberal ideal always available elsewhere. Thus the effective transmutation of Singapore into a personalist one-party regime continues in spite of a sharp diminution in recent years in the external threats to that island city-state. Even in Japan, indeed, the identification of the long-ruling Liberal Democratic Party with most of the other founts of power and influence has become unhealthily complete.
Almost everywhere, in fact, the prospects for democracy ebb and flow uncertainly. Little more need here be said about the experience of Near East Major, except to stress that the spearhead role of the Jewish intelligentsia in many aspects of modern Western thought (not least political thought) gives the affairs of Israel an importance that far transcends regional geopolitics. How much progress has recently been made in South Africa depends on whether you think the government has a 'hidden agenda' for extending constitutional reform. Zimbabwe is a disappointment. Democracy has been revived in the Argentine but not in Chile. Trends in the Caribbean are hard to summate, let alone predict.

Meanwhile, the hope that a new though still special relationship between Peking and Hongkong might further an evolution to democratic pluralism throughout mainland China has not been dashed by periodic outbreaks of impatience in Peking with either London or Washington. But it is not yet clear whether the Peoples' Republic has amassed enough managerial talent to cope with any very swift liberalisation, economic and political, at national level.

Still, the USSR remains easily the most important Communist factor in this whole equation. Nor is there any doubt that ethnic pluralism remains at the very heart of her agonizing about whether and how to liberalise her politics in order to stay in line with the ineluctable evolution of her technical and institutional infrastructure. For suppose a free political debate were allowed

on such matters as the devolution of decision-making from Moscow, the decollectivisation (partial or total) of agriculture, the toleration of religious belief and observance, the burden of defence expenditure, the price mechanism or the individual and the law. Soon there would be a strong differentiation of attitudes along nationality lines, most of the national minorities taking the more liberal line most of the time.93

In this way, Moscow could find its fear of disintegration (see Chapter 2) being borne out only too well.

In terms of experience, the late Yuri Andropov was as well placed to try and square this circle as any Soviet leader is likely to be. He was aware that drastic reforms
are imperative if the Soviet economy is to stay at all viable. Yet he combined this with what was, in Muscovite terms, a solid conservative background. His leadership of the KGB (from 1967 to 1982) was the key element therein. But also germane was his career as a young man in the Karelo-Finnish SSR. For this must have brought him much into contact with the Leningrad school of Soviet Communism; and hence with the singular blend of ideological militancy and geostrategic retrenchment so forcefully advocated within the Kremlin, between 1946 and 1948, by the said school's chief protege, Andrei Zhdanov (see Chapter 2). Perhaps, too, Andropov's wartime years there made him the more conscious of the technological ascendancy of the West, as reflected in the Nazi sweep to Leningrad but also in the Allied supply route through Murmansk and Archangel.

All the same, the greater scope for entrepreneurial initiative that he sought to proffer (until his health finally collapsed) was hardly a new concept. In the 1950s, Georgi Malenkov and, in the 1960s, Alexei Kosygin had similar aims. But each was to be frustrated by the apparatchiki in party and government. On the other hand, success in these limited aims could have started a chain reaction of liberalisation more extensive than anything these leaders had in mind. Needless to say, the same bleak alternatives present themselves to Konstantin Chernenko. Indeed, the choice is starker than ever.

In this situation, the West may have a role to play. What has to be admitted, however, is that the history of the last few years (Olympic boycotts, grain embargoes, pipelines, exotic technology, and the like) indicates a recurrent lack of consensus as to how this role should be configured or what its purposes should be.

To some extent, the confusion that has prevailed stems from painful rediscovery of the simple truth that merely deterring an adversary from doing unacceptable things is elementary compared with coaxing him into what one sees as a positive approach. Yet over and beyond that are sharp philosophical divisions within the West itself.

Not the least of these of late has been a split within the Republican party and administration in the USA. On the one side is a radical Right school of thought which is obsessed with the comprehensive containment of the USSR; keen for the putative restoration of 'strategic superiority'
through Ballistic Missile Defence in Space; fearful that the arms control dialogues will prove not just fruitless but debilitating; dismissive of Keynesian economics; contemptuous of the UN; prepared to play down 'human rights' when these conflict with immediate geostrategic imperatives; inclined, in any case, to condone 'authoritarian' Rightist regimes though not 'totalitarian' Leftist ones; and anxious to stress a commitment to Latin America and the Caribbean while being studiedly equivocal about that to NATO Europe. Against which is a centrist school of thought that would either oppose diametrically or discount heavily all these preconceptions; and which would, in addition, be more prepared to treat global economic planning as a needful part of Grand Strategy.

The former would, for instance, be disposed to regret Britain's recapture of the Falklands; support Israel's invasion of the Lebanon; and seek to effect the fall of Gadaffi and maybe Castro, as well as the regime in Nicaragua. The latter would demur at or dissent from each of these pitches. Added to which there may be a profound difference over whether the West can or should aid the USSR through its crisis of liberalisation.

The challenge presented by the more Rightist school calls to mind the isolationist years and also how the outbreak of the Korean war in June 1950 gave a fresh opportunity to what may be called the Pacific Firsters within the Republican Party. Many of these men ... came from the Middle West or the Pacific Coast and they tended to resent what they saw as the control of their party and country by the Ivy League and Wall Street. Their natural conservatism found its current expression not so much in domestic 'bread-and-butter' issues as in international and ideological ones. They placed more emphasis than the Democrats and the Eastern Republicans on the importance of the Pacific and on the deterrent and punitive effect of air and seapower; they placed less on the need to keep wars limited and on the value of multilateral alliances and of the commitment of American ground troops to Europe.
Moreover, there was a close connection, psychologically and culturally, between this xenophobic reaction against involvement in Europe, and the drive that Senator Joseph McCarthy was leading against what he saw as the subversion of Fortress America by alien influences.

An intense concern with the Caribbean is among the traits the new radical Right has in common with the old. It is a concern that relates to the Panama canal as a link between the Eastern seaboard and the Pacific. Suffice to note the powerful symbolism in the coincidence that this canal was opened to shipping the very day in August 1914 that the British Empire declared war on Germany, the USA then staying 'neutral even in thought' in regard to events in Europe.

Be that as it may, however, there are significant differences between now and times past. There is virtually no equivalent today of the McCarthy campaign. Meanwhile, the battle-lines within the Republican party are drawn less neatly than before. Jeanne Kirkpatrick and George Schultz may stand fair and square on the Right and in the Centre respectively. But other prominent people, among them Henry Kissinger and lately Alexander Haig, bestride the said division.

Nor could any tendency within the USA to dissociate from Europe nowadays be to even the relative advantage of many people in the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific. All it might do there is render Washington more willing to accept uncritically the political status quo in South Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan and various parts of Central and South America. Otherwise, a strategy primarily based on the Atlantic Alliance would be replaced not by authentic Pacific Firstism but by a unilateral globalism, geared in part to the physical securing of key resources but mainly to the containment regardless of the USSR.

In any case, there are several grounds for believing that such an approach would be doomed to failure. The most obvious is that the end result of a cleavage between the USA and Western Europe would probably be a USSR paramount from the Urals to Brittany. If so, the USA and her remaining allies might soon find themselves faced with a renewed accord between Moscow and Peking, if only because the differences between these two capitals relate closely to Soviet anxieties about deviationism in Eastern Europe.
Paramountcy across all Europe would not eliminate this threat to Moscow's authority but would render it a lot more manageable.

Even if the Atlantic Alliance did survive as an effective entity, however, it might gratuitously place itself at a great disadvantage if (at the behest of Washington) it became too exclusively preoccupied with the military constraint of the Soviet Union. For one thing, it could stultify what might otherwise be valuable dialogues, not least with Soviet scientists about burgeoning 'planetary' problems. For another, the combination of nuclear stalemate and strategic geography leaves the military initiative in Soviet hands in the final analysis. In other words, one has to reckon with the fact that the masses de manoeuvre Moscow commands can, in principle, deploy along the 'interior lines' of communication of its North Eurasian vastnesses, thus keeping the initiative all round its periphery. The theme is one which served to complement pre-1914 British thinking about 'warm-water ports'. That doyen of British geography, Sir Halford Mackinder, became especially associated with it.

Granted, when put to the test (e.g. during the Crimean and Russo-Japanese wars) Czarist Russia proved quite unable to exploit this quasi-Euclidean theorem. This was on account of shortcomings in administration and in the transport infrastructure and usually, too, because there were evident limits to the military strength that the respective sectors could accommodate, given the constraints imposed by their physical and economic geography. The latter point was succinctly put by Lord Salisbury when he was Secretary of State for India during the Anglo-Turko-Russian crisis of 1877-78. Referring to a threat presumptively posed by the extension of Czarist power towards Merv (the ancient Turkoman city Russia was eventually to occupy in 1883), he jibed that 'Mervousness does not stand the test of large-scale maps'.

However, the painful but insistent development of the USSR has led to advances in strategic mobility, internal as well as external. Graphic historical examples are the reinforcement of the Moscow front from the Far East late in 1941 and the contrary flow from Europe to the borders of Manchuria and Korea in the early summer of 1945.95 A contemporary one may be the drastic reorganisation now in progress of Soviet home-based air power.96 Meanwhile, the
post-Brezhnev Kremlin seems likely to give high priority to a general improvement in internal transportation. Besides which, the argument about sectoral geography can be turned on its head. In Near East Major, in particular, the physical and human factors combine to present Moscow with various opportunities for limited military incursions; pre-emptive air or naval action; or aggression by proxy that would be hard to counter with the US Rapid Deployment Force or in other ways. Needless to say, these opportunities would be further enhanced if the political situation in the region was moving in Moscow's favour, perhaps thanks to neglect by the West.

Still more importantly, the termination of any limited war or warlike confrontation involving the Soviet Union may be extremely difficult to achieve against a background of strategic nuclear stalemate. After all, the indefinite continuation of such a state of belligerency might suit the fascisto-Marxist inclination within Kremlin opinion far better than it would almost any school of thought in the West. Indeed, it is hard to see how liberal democracy can hope to flourish except in an international climate in which Limited World War is only an ultimate possibility, not an active reality. Let us not forget that the despotisms of Nineteen Eighty-Four sustain themselves through the indefinite perpetuation of Limited World War.

All of which seems tantamount to saying that liberal democracy can flourish only as the product of a Grand Strategy which embraces precepts more positive than mere containment. This would be one in which the arms control aspect is on par with defence; dialogue on par with deterrence; the economic and political factors on par with the military; and the 'planetary' at least on par with the 'international'.
Notes

22. Peter Odell *Oil and World Power* Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975, p.64.
25. An exponential trend is one with a constant percentage increase per standard interval of time: usually, of course, a calendar year.
34. 'Nation in the Middle' *Asiaweek*, Vol.6 No.8, 29 February 1980, pp.29-34.
41. See the Special Report on 'Northern Greece' in *The Times* 16 August 1978.
42. 'Filling a Void' *An Economist Survey* 13 February 1982.
47. The Economist 7 January 1981.
49. 'No Melting Pot' The Economist 11 June 1983.
50. 'Not Our Kind of Nuclear' The Economist 17 November 1979
52. Elie Kedourie Islamic Revolution Salisbury paper No.6, 1979, p.4.
54. Amazia Baram 'Sadam Hussein: A Political Profile' The Jerusalem Quarterly No.17, Fall 1980, pp.115-144.
57. See Neville Brown Inaugural Lecture Silver Wings in the Twilight The University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 1983.
59. 'Israel's Way: We Tried Hard to Spare Civilians' The Times, 14 July 1982.
62. Ibid., p.1074.
63. Ibid., p.1072.
64. See Neville Brown The Future Global Challenge, op.cit., p.289.
65. The Times 10 July 1980.
68. John Dunn 'How Is It That India Hasn't Had a Social Revolution?' The Listener Vol.103 No.2665, 12 June 1980, pp.742-44.
72. The Economist 26 February 1983.
75. See Neville Brown's 'Lethal Beams in Space' presented to the 6th National Quantum Electronics Conference at the University of Sussex, Britain. This paper is reproduced in Navy International Vol.88 No.11, November 1983, pp.676-81.
82. John Strachey Contemporary Capitalism Victor Gollancz, London, 1956, Chapter XIII.
85. The Times 9 June 1982.
86. The Future Global Challenge op. cit., p. 41.
88. 'America and the Falklands' The Economist 12 November 1983.
92. The Economist 13 August 1983.
94. Ibid., pp. 684-685.
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