

Prime Minister Highgrove,

C.D.P.

197X.

Ashburton,

8th Oct.

S. Devon.

Tony Parsons

Dear Prime Minister,

Very many thanks for last week. I much enjoyed the opportunity to talk to you about a variety of matters. Most agreeable and stimulating for an old retired buffer.

I have been thinking a lot - plenty of time to do so - about the main topic. First I cannot accept the view that we are engaged in a struggle the outcome of which must be either a world blanketed by the Stars and Stripes or a world suffocated by the Hammer and sickle. I feel sure that the world will remain messy and multipolar and that it has become more rather than less so during the past 25 years or so. I also reject the notion that the struggle is so impleacable that West must behave as ruthlessly and unscrupulously as East in order to hold its own. If this doctrine is adopted - the end justifying the means without qualification - we will have lost our way. Since the Middle Ages we have believed in the value of the individual and of his free choice - person or state - whereas the Communists still adhere to →

the medieval philosophy that the individual is simply the raw material of a community governed by an ineluctable structure of ideology, be it religious or secular. Ours is the better way and we must not abandon it.

Second I reject the idea that international law is a stick with which to beat our adversaries when they transgress and an obstacle for us to circumvent, albeit with skill and despatch, when it suits us to do so. Obviously we would be unrealistic to regard it as a total straitjacket ~~even~~ if our national security, British communities abroad, or the fundamentals of humanitarianism were directly threatened. But we should only break through the framework, to the building of which we have contributed so much, in extreme circumstances.

I see such circumstances in practice as comprising the following:—

- (i) a direct threat to our national security — You and I and Richard Howard discussed a possible scenario over dinner.
- (ii) danger to a British community in a more or less anarchic situation such as the Lebanon.
- (iii) to oust a government which had transgressed every norm of human behaviour — Amin, Pol Pot, Hlaciak, Bokassa, Duvalier.

3.

Since it is most unlikely that Britain will be in a position to have to act directly in situations (i) and (iii), the problem really is - how do we react when one of our friends intervenes in another state without invitation or international sanction?

I believe that we should be guided by the above, i.e. that we should expect our friends to behave according to our own principles. If, say, the French had moved in militarily and thrown out Bokassa, we should have said - yes, they have broken international law but, in such circumstances of mass murder and atrocity, we cannot in all humanity condemn them. If the Russians, à la Cuba 1962, set up missile bases in Nicaragua, ~~we should say~~ ^{and the} Americans moved in militarily, we should say - yes, they have broken international law but every government which is basically non-aggressive, elected by and responsible to its own people, must be the final judge of its national security.

But, if one of our friends made such a move on an obviously trumped up pretext, simply to get rid of a government which they did not like, then, without making too much of a meal of it, we should make our disapproval clear, publicly and privately.

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By doing so we would be doing the right thing and contributing to maintaining the basic distinction between East and West which is not only our strength but also one of our attractions for the uncommitted world.

Sorry to burden you with a regard: you have much more important things to do than to read letters from me. I promise that this is not the first of a series!

with warmest good wishes.

Yours ever

Tony