

E. R.  
PRIME MINISTER

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(Wukew Box)

Robert Conquest

The folder below contains the material which Robert Conquest left with you when he called on 23 August. The <sup>hp</sup> attached paper "Britain and the American Misconception of Soviet Motives" covers the main point which he wished to raise with you.

I think that Robert Conquest takes too pessimistic a view of the expertise on the Soviet Union which is available to President Carter and Mr. Vance in Washington. Of the advisers whom he names on page 2 of his note, I cannot comment on the qualifications of Mr. Legvold or Mr. Hough. But I do know that Dr. Marshall Shulman's credentials in Soviet affairs are very respectable (he was Director of the Russian Research Centre at Harvard when I first went there in 1958 and has since held the Chair in Russian Studies at Columbia University) and his recent writings in, for example, "Foreign Affairs" are well informed and trenchant. Moreover, I think Robert Conquest pays too little regard to the second echelon of professional Soviet experts in the State Department, in the CIA and in the National Security Council, most of whom I have met and whom I consider to be of very high calibre indeed and just as alive to Soviet realities as Robert Conquest himself.

That said, I think Robert Conquest is quite right to make the point that British academic expertise on the Soviet Union and on Communism in general is deployed much less effectively, in terms of influencing official opinion, than it is in the United States; and it is also true that the views of men like Leonard Schapiro, Hugh Seton-Watson and Robert Conquest himself

/do command

do command wide respect in the US. I frankly doubt whether it would be helpful to set up a body such as the "Advisory Commission on Soviet Intentions" which Robert Conquest proposes, at any rate in the form he suggests which seems too heavily weighted towards academia. But it would be well worth devising some means of bringing about closer links and co-operation between our academic experts and the FCO: consideration could be given, for example, to including one or two such experts in the teams which quite regularly go across to Washington to discuss Soviet and other Communist affairs with the Americans.

Would you like me to send a short note to Lord Carrington's office on Robert Conquest's call on you and to ask whether consideration could be given to mobilising our own non-official Soviet experts more effectively?

*Yes. his idea of  
- from under A D-4 in -  
good one  
Mr.*

28 August 1979

B.R. 1

PRIME MINISTER

Robert Conquest

Following your talk with Mr. Conquest at the end of August, I wrote to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office about Mr. Conquest's suggestion that an advisory commission on Soviet intentions should be established. I attach Mr. Walden's reply giving the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's reaction to the proposal. As you will see, Lord Carrington is much in favour of closer contact between Soviet experts in Government service and those outside. He thinks that in the first instance a seminar on Soviet intentions might be organised this winter at which the participants would include officials and academics. In the light of the outcome of the seminar, a decision might be taken on whether to formalise it.

As it happens I had minuted two days ago to Sir John Hunt, following your meeting with Mr. Tovey, saying that you would like to have a study put in hand of the current thinking of the Soviet leadership. I attach a copy of the relevant part of my minute.

If you agree, I will write to Mr. Walden saying that you agree with the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's approach but that you would like the proposed seminar to be held relatively soon and for its conclusions to be taken into account in the JIC study. If the two exercises can be dovetailed, the outcome might be a paper of real value to you.

Thankyou. — Agreed  
ms.  
AmA

20 September 1979

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 September 1979

Dear Michael,

Robert Conquest

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has read the paper by Mr Conquest enclosed with your letter of 6 September and entitled "Britain and the American Misconception of Soviet Motives".

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary is strongly in favour of closer contact between experts on Soviet affairs in the Government Service, including not only the FCO but also the Cabinet Office and elsewhere, and those in the universities and in journalism engaging in the same study. There has in fact been a good deal of contact for many years, for example by the participation of FCO officials in Professor Leonard Schapiro's seminars at the London School of Economics, and through the sabbatical work on Soviet subjects done by officials at several universities. But the present time is especially suitable for the experts to put their heads together about Soviet intentions in the critical period of the early 1980s (Dr Kissinger's "window of danger") when it seems likely both that the Soviet Union will be under new leadership and that Soviet military strength in relation to the United States will be greater than ever before, possibly greater than in the second half of the decade.

Lord Carrington is therefore thinking of giving instructions that a seminar on this subject should be organised during the coming winter, at which the participants would comprise both academics such as Conquest himself and others, and also officials including our Ambassador in Moscow. Any conclusions reached by this gathering could then be discussed with the Americans in the usual way on both the official and academic channel.

We could then judge in the light of the usefulness of the seminar whether to formalise it.

*T. sue*  
*J. V.*

(G G H Walden)  
Private Secretary

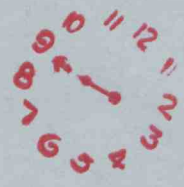
M O D'B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

20 SEP 1979



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*no vs  
for post.*

*B/F 1/12/79*

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 September 1979

*B/F 1<sup>1</sup> 2<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>3</sup> 4<sup>4</sup>  
31/10/79  
to check is MODBA if  
we should enquire on  
progress.*

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 19 September about the follow up to her meeting with Mr. Robert Conquest.

The Prime Minister agrees that a seminar of the kind proposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should be held and that a decision about whether or not to perpetuate the seminar should be taken in the light of its outcome.

You may already be aware that the Prime Minister has very recently asked the JIC to undertake a broad study of the current thinking and outlook of the Soviet leadership (assuming that there is not a currently valid study on the stocks). I enclose an extract from a minute setting out the Prime Minister's wishes. The Prime Minister would like the seminar proposed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the JIC exercise to be dovetailed so that the outcome is a single piece of work. This suggests that the proposed seminar should be held in the relatively near future.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Martin Vile (Cabinet Office), together with a copy of your letter under reference.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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*RP*

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MR. ALEXANDER

*Foreign Policy 2*  
*Top Copy filed in*  
*Security: May 79: Briefing*  
*In PM on Intelligence + Subversion*

This minute is in reply to the two points about the JIC raised in the fourth and fifth paragraphs of your minute of 18th September which otherwise dealt with Mr. Tovey's call on the Prime Minister.

2. The Prime Minister's wish to attend a meeting of the JIC is, of course, very welcome. I think it is important however that this should be arranged for a day when the chairman (Sir Antony Duff) can be sure of being in the chair himself. This may point to waiting until after the end of the Lancaster House Conference on Rhodesia. There is also the point that the JIC's regular weekly meeting is on Thursday morning when the Prime Minister has Cabinet. The JIC will therefore need to meet at a different time: and the Prime Minister has, of course, got Questions on Thursday afternoon if Parliament is sitting. But these are details which you could no doubt sort out direct with Sir Antony Duff.

3. The Prime Minister asked about studies on the motivation and intentions of the Soviet Government (as opposed to studies of capabilities, opportunities, etc.). The most recent JIC paper relevant to this is JIC(79) 5 of 14th May which deals with the long-term aims of the foreign policy in the Soviet leadership. If the Prime Minister has not read it before, she may like to do so. I do not however think that it fully meets her basic question about underlying motivation and intentions. Nor does a separate but related JIC report which is currently being prepared and which will aim to define the characteristics of the Soviet Union with which we will be dealing in the 1980s. This will start by identifying the constant factors in Soviet policy and analysing the likely strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and go on to assess how these and other factors may shape Soviet policies during the period. I have therefore commissioned a study by the JIC which will seek to analyse in depth the thinking and motivation of the Soviet leaders and will not, as JIC assessments tend to, emphasise the limitations, as we currently perceive them, on Soviet freedom of action.

4. The Prime Minister also asked about whether we drew sufficiently on (i) information of recent emigres and (ii) academics with a professional interest in the Soviet Union.

SECRET

5. To take first the use of emigres (as distinct from defectors), I am informed that every effort is made to obtain intelligence from them. But the Soviet regime tries to prevent anyone leaving the country who possesses sensitive information. Although some emigres, particularly among those who go to Israel, yield valuable intelligence of a technical kind, the contribution of emigres is usually limited and low-grade.

6. As regards academics, the Ministry of Defence have for some time been planning a symposium early in December, in which academics will participate, on Soviet foreign and defence policies. Following your letter to Mr. Walden of 21st September about the follow-up to the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Conquest, the FCO have now suggested that the MOD seminar should be expanded so as to include Mr. Conquest and some other notable expert and this is now being arranged. The two new JIC papers referred to in paragraph 3 above will take account of the results of the seminars.

JOHN HUNT

(John Hunt)

3rd October 1979



~~SECRET~~

● Extract from a <sup>minute</sup> ~~letter~~ to Sir. Hunt recording the meeting with the Torrey of GCHQ

More generally, the Prime Minister voiced considerable interest in the way in which Intelligence produced by GCHQ and through other channels is collated and assessed. She is anxious that assessment should be, to the extent possible, objective and that policy (or political) considerations should not be allowed to intrude. She said that she would like to attend a meeting of the JIC. You may like to discuss with Sir Antony Duff how this might most satisfactorily be arranged.

The Prime Minister would also like to be re-assured that we are making use of, and co-ordinating effectively, Intelligence from every source on the motivation and intentions of the Soviet Government. She mentioned the need not to overlook recent émigrés and academics with a professional interest in the Soviet Union, particularly those who themselves have a Russian background. I am not sure when the JIC last carried out a broad study of the thinking of the Soviet leadership (as opposed to studies of the military capability and immediate intentions of the Soviet Union). If there is nothing on the stocks, the Prime Minister would like a study to be put in hand.

Finally, the Prime Minister has said that she intends in future to ask for more assessments on short-term issues of concern to her. I shall, of course, pass on these requests as and when they are made.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

18 September 1979

Original filed  
Security May '79 (Intell. subs.)

SECRET



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

6 September, 1979.

*Foreign Policy*

*Dear George,*

Robert Conquest

Robert Conquest called on the Prime Minister on 23 August. The enclosed paper entitled "Britain and the American Misconception of Soviet Motives" covers the main point which Mr. Conquest wished to raise.

The Prime Minister is interested in the idea advanced in paragraph 6 of Mr. Conquest's paper viz that an "advisory commission on Soviet intentions" should be set up. I think it would be useful if, in due course, you could seek the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's views on the suggestion.

If the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary were to consider that an advisory commission on the lines proposed might not be a particularly fruitful innovation, especially, if so heavily weighted with academics, he might nonetheless think it worth putting forward a counter-proposal focussed on the desirability of bringing about closer links between academic experts and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. One suggestion which might be worth looking at would be the inclusion of outside specialists in the teams which regularly go from Whitehall to Washington to discuss Soviet and other Communist affairs with the Americans.

I shall be grateful if you would ensure that knowledge of the fact that I have sent you a copy of Mr. Conquest's paper is kept to a limited number of people in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*Yours ever*

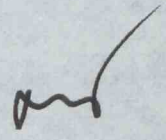
*Michael Alexander*

G.G.H. Walden, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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*ca*

Britain and the American Misconception  
of Soviet Motives



The central problem facing the British Government is clearly the twin threat of nuclear war and Soviet domination.

But at present the most urgent aspect of this problem is the wholly unrealistic and misleading view of Soviet attitudes now prevalent in the United States Administration. The crucial question is, therefore, how can we bring influence to bear on Washington to change its course?

2. A major element in the consolidation of a false view of Soviet intentions in the American governmental mind has been the assembly of supposed experts, of academic provenance, to give it credibility. A score of these, far the highest number of such political appointments to be seen there in recent decades, have been included at high levels in the State Department, and others in the National Security Council, while yet others play a supportive role outside government in the organs of the so-called "Foreign Policy Establishment." They are all in the

strictest sense "McGovernites". Those in State were recruited through Tony Lake, who, with Leslie Gerb (in charge of armaments questions at State) is among the most awkward.

They are not in fact men of real repute. Mr. Marshall Shulman, who holds the post of Vance's Advisor on Soviet matters, with the rank of Ambassador, is a (not very good) student of French affairs, who does not speak Russian, and whose claim is based on an administratively accidental tenure at the Columbia Russian Institute. His leading extra-governmental supporter, Robert Legvold, is a student of South African affairs, recently drifted into Soviet matters. These two are in effect weak and pliable followers of fashion. Others, better informed, are most charitably to be described as half-crazed: for example, Jerry Hough (extra-governmental), who has recently asserted that Stalin hardly killed anybody at all. At the other end of the scale are men like Averill Harriman, on record as saying that he accepts assurances of goodwill from Brezhnev and Co, because it is inconceivable that they would venture to deceive him; and so on. I say nothing of the attitudes of the President himself, and of certain of his advisors such as Mr. Andrew Young.

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3. We should note that British opinion, or the opinion of Britons, carries greatly disproportionate weight in the United States. And particularly in this sphere. Even as individuals, Britons of any repute are often asked to testify (as I have done several times myself) to Senate and House Committees. To cite another personal experience: when Dr. Helmuth Sonnenfeld was Dr. Kissinger's chief envoy, he would when spending a few hours in London, get hold of me to try to persuade me that he was acting correctly, (usually failing). I give my own case, because, at the time, I had no current academic or other institutional status at all. If a Briton in this position can have some influence, it is easy to imagine that a body of such, with more formal credentials, would have very much more.

It is even the case that left-wing American magazines, which would not dream of printing anything by an American "reactionary", are prepared to accept a Briton: as with the New York Review of Books, which is now printing Leonard Schapiro's devastating review of a potentially influential work by Jerry Hough; just as it prints Hugh Trevor-Roper and others.

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The Americans are deeply impressed, even within their own country, by Institutions, Centers and so forth, invariably described as "prestigious". This results, already, in reasonable publicity for British views not in accord with current American thinking, if put forward by the "prestigious" Institute for Strategic Studies, and even for people who would be regarded individually as grossly, even grotesquely, reactionary, such as Mr. Brian Crozier, since incorporated into his "Institute for the Study of Conflict".

4. How, then, could British influence be maximised?

Pronouncements by the Prime Minister or Foreign Secretary carry great weight. But it is inevitable that, in the first place, they cannot be made very often; and in the second that considerations of international protocol - vis-a-vis Moscow as well as Washington - are bound to some degree to blunt their emphasis.

Our Ambassador in Washington may also speak on occasion, but he is, in general, even more inhibited from giving public advice to the American administration.

Our Ambassador to the United Nations, not being accredited

to the U.S. Government, is not under such inhibitions. At present the post is held by a career diplomat, who can hardly speak freely: but in my view it should be a political appointment, and one somewhat in the nature of those of Daniel P. Moynihan and Andrew Young, responsible in principle to the Secretary of State, but in practice to the head of the government or the government as a whole. Such a political appointee, who should in any case be conducting a vigorous defensive and counter-offensive role in the United Nations itself, and thereby making the American press and other media (as Lord Gladwyn did in his time), would also be in a position to speak strongly in American fora.

5. The Foreign Office is in any case not, one would say, organised to provide a profound, long-term view of Soviet ends. There are several excellent experts in it, but they are comparatively isolated in special departments, and kept to a lowish hierarchical level; and those concerned with high policy are inclined to be, in the natural course of such careers, Jacks of all trades. This is not to say that the current American system of the intrusion of "experts" at an executive level in the department is necessarily a good thing. Nor, of course, that any British equivalent of Marshall Shulman is conceivable

under our system. Nevertheless a gap exists.

6. I would suggest that the heaviest possible weight might be brought by the setting up of an official, (or "quasi") Advisory Commission on Soviet Intentions responsible to the Prime Minister: a small body of five or six people, perhaps chaired by Lord Home, (or Lord Caccia), and containing Hugh Seton-Watson, Leonard Schapiro and myself; with possibly a Foreign Office representative, such as Eddie Bolland. This would carry the weight of the individuals, the weight of an institution, and the weight of H.M. Government. Its initial Report, which should not take long to produce (and which should be strong, firm, lucid and comparatively brief) would have very great impact in the United States. And it could follow this up with occasional pronouncements. At the same time the appearance of any of us in the United States as individuals, which would be a perfectly natural and usual thing for all of us, would give our already fairly effective comments enormously greater power.

Of course, apart from the effect in Washington, such a Commission should anyhow be of great value in itself.

Robert Cypert  
20/8/71



# FEATURES COLUMNISTS

## STRATEGIC REVIEW

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NO. 3

### SALT II: A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

MANFRED WÖRNER



THE AUTHOR: Manfred Wörner is the Chairman of the Defense Committee in the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany and Speaker on defense matters in the parliamentary delegation of the Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union. He has served in the Bundestag since 1965 as a representative of a district in Baden-Württemberg. He is a Lieutenant Colonel and jet pilot in the West German Luftwaffe Reserve. His article, "NATO Defenses and Tactical Nuclear Weapons," appeared in the Fall 1977 issue of *Strategic Review*.

#### IN BRIEF

*SALT II and the raging internal American debate confront West Europeans with a diplomatic dilemma, which governments have sought to solve with what appear as sweeping endorsements. Yet in one measure or another, all knowledgeable Europeans hold some reservations about the Treaty. There is the fear that the door will be slammed upon urgent options in theater nuclear capabilities, especially since the Soviet Union has already posited its interpretation of a durable and comprehensive ban on cruise missile deployments in Europe. A perceived trend toward a "low strategic profile" by the United States has profound implications for the "extended deterrent" over NATO Europe. Moreover, in the wake of SALT II and the absence of quick redressive measures, NATO's bargaining prospects in SALT III promise to be scant indeed.*

**T**he SALT II Treaty has been signed by President Carter and Chairman Brezhnev. With Brezhnev's signature, the Treaty has in effect been ratified by the Soviet Union. The same does not apply to the United States, where the issue of formal ratification by the U.S. Senate is still very much up in the air. At this writing, no one can predict with confidence whether there will indeed be a SALT II—and if so, what its precise contents and ramifications will look like. An element of U.S. foreign policy has become in a real sense a function of American domestic politics.

To that extent, SALT II has also become an exceptionally delicate problem of diplomacy for

all of America's allies. Every articulated European opinion of SALT inevitably smacks of meddling in internal American affairs.

The way European governments have gone about solving this dilemma is both understandable and disquieting. Placed before the choice of endorsing the position of the U.S. government or that of its opposition, a European government obviously feels compelled to opt for the former. But frequently such an exercise in diplomatic niceties comes to mean a sweeping endorsement of SALT II, irrespective of any reservations that may be entertained about the Treaty.

And, in one measure or another, all knowl-  
(See SALT II, Pg 2-F)

**SALT II -- CONTINUED**

Ageable Europeans hold reservations about SALT II, even though they may voice these only in confidential tones. The following observations constitute an attempt to express such reservations. They should not be interpreted as being intrinsically "for" or "against" SALT II. A sweeping endorsement of the Treaty seems to be as inappropriate as a categorical rejection. This writer has followed SALT with sympathy. The attempt to harness, limit or reduce armaments merits every endeavor. Should it be possible to establish permanent and comprehensive strategic parity between the two superpowers, surely the world would become a more stable and thus more secure place.

But the SALT II Treaty also touches the foundations of European and German security. It thus demands that positions be taken—not categorical positions, to be sure, but careful ones, commensurate with the complexity of the technical and political issues involved. If in voicing such positions one risks being marshaled as a prime witness by one or the other side to the American debate, so be it. To remain silent would reinforce the impression that Germans and other Europeans have grown incapable of formulating their vital interests and have thus been rendered mute in the strategic dialogue.

The problems posed for Europeans by the SALT II Treaty range at four different levels:

1. The Protocol of the Treaty bears directly on possible European military options.
2. The provisions of the Treaty regarding technology transfer as well as the so-called non-circumvention clause do not necessarily discriminate against Europe, but the imprecise formulations make a battle of interpretations well nigh inevitable.
3. The strategic force relationships fixed in the Treaty, official U.S. elaborations on this score, as well as the way the United States has dealt with redressive weapons decisions thus far sharpen the impression of a U.S. policy of "low strategic profile," the perception of which would have profound implications for Western Europe.
4. The question arises whether and to what extent the negotiations toward SALT II, as well as their conclusion, impart certain real and perceived precedents for SALT III and the MBFR negotiations.

*The Protocol to the SALT II Treaty*

An inevitable consequence of rough parity between the superpowers at the strategic nuclear level is the growing significance of military imbalances at the regional level. In the new strategic environment, each superpower will find its global interests vulnerably exposed within those regional sub-systems wherein it fails demonstrably to muster an adequate balancing weight against the adversary's power. But this also means that such regions of military and political imbalance will be the first to feel the heat of any new conflict between the superpowers. In light of the relentless expansion of Soviet superiority in theater nuclear capabilities in Europe, it behooves the United

States—in its self-interest as well as those of its allies—to use all available means to redress this imbalance.

The above makes it all the more astonishing that the United States has obligated itself, under the Protocol to the SALT II Treaty, not to construct and deploy land- or sea-based cruise missiles, either conventional or nuclear, with ranges of more than 600 kilometers—and to enter into this obligation without exacting a comparable concession from the Soviet Union. The obligation slams the door upon some potentially important and urgent security options for the European members of NATO.

To be sure, the Protocol is supposed to expire on December 31, 1981. The danger is real, however, that the restrictions will be extended beyond this date in order to be set in concrete in SALT III. Reinforcing this fear, among other things, is the unequivocal position of the Soviet Union, which was expressed already on February 11, 1978, by *Pravda*:

These figures [U.S. SALT critics] would like to remove from the limitations sea-launched and surface-launched cruise missiles. This is in fact a blatant attempt to insure right now that after the three-year term of the protocol ends there is freedom of action to develop such missiles and increase their agreed range above 600 km, and ultimately to retain the possibility of deploying them outside the United States—that is, as close as possible to the USSR's borders. Comment, as they say, is superfluous. It is surely quite obvious that this is yet another attempt to emasculate the limitations already agreed on and to wreck the agreement as a whole.

The Soviet Union thus has given clear notice that it intends to consider any deviation from the cruise missile limitations, even after the expiration of the Protocol, as compromising the entire substantive basis of SALT II. This interpretation is ostensibly reinforced by the Statement of Principles in the Treaty, which set the guidelines for future negotiations. The last Principle calls for the "resolutions of the issues included in the Protocol. . . ." It thus envisages that those issues that are given temporary treatment in SALT II under the Protocol will be passed on to more conclusive settlement in SALT III.

The implication is clear, therefore, that following the expiration of the three-year Protocol, the issue of longer-range cruise missiles will be the subject of further negotiations, and no one can anticipate their duration. Legal as well as practical considerations militate against a one-sided exercise of the longer-range cruise missile option while the negotiations would be in progress. Moreover, the Soviet Union has recourse to a powerful lever for sustaining the Protocol provisions beyond their formal expiration date—namely, in its developed (and probably produced) SS-16 mobile ICBMs, whose deployment is also barred by the Protocol. If the Soviets were to introduce these mobile systems after December 1981, the United States could not counter with comparable capabilities until well into the late 1980s.

(See SALT II, Pg. 3-F)



SALT II -- CONTINUED

The notion is already making the rounds in Europe today that, assuming SALT II should be ratified, the only chance for NATO to grasp the cruise missile option would be a U.S. decision to forgo SALT III entirely—a prospect that is neither realistic nor inspiring. If one adds to the calculations the fact that the Soviet Union has successfully tested long-range cruise missiles of its own—as well as the fears expressed in American official circles that parts of the Soviet Navy may already be equipped with the weapons system—then the dismal prospect (from the European perspective) points at best toward continued bilateral U.S.-Soviet restrictions on cruise missiles. Such a protraction of limitations would be reinforced by Soviet threats of a return to a cold war footing, combined with the possible “carrot” of some marginal Soviet concessions in the strategic nuclear arena.

The likelihood of this kind of scenario is upheld by the record of the past decade. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger justifiably criticized the Protocol for creating “an illusory impression of temporariness,” elaborating that “I don’t know of any such protocol that has expired.”<sup>1</sup>

In light of all these factors, Americans should not be surprised that their assurances regarding a lifting of all cruise missile restrictions by 1982 are greeted with a marked skepticism on the part of Europeans.

Technology Transfer and Non-Circumvention

There has been a strange silence in Western Europe with respect to the provisions of SALT II dealing with non-circumvention of the Treaty in the broadest sense—notwithstanding the knowledge that this provision is formulated rather vaguely. Two reasons account for this. On the one hand, this Treaty provision has been interpreted largely in the context of the aforementioned Protocol restrictions on cruise missile deployments. On the other hand, Europeans have tended to rely on comforting American interpretations of the non-circumvention clause in SALT II.

Particularly in view of the doubts noted above regarding a timely elapse of the Protocol restrictions on cruise missiles, a negligent attitude toward the non-circumvention clause hardly seems justified. Indeed, the combination of the Protocol restrictions and the non-circumvention clause suggests the contingency that not only will the European members of NATO be barred from American land- and sea-based cruise missiles (GLCMs and SLCMs), but that they may be similarly blocked from the option of fitting long-range air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on tactical NATO aircraft like the FB-III, F-4 and Tornado. To this must be added the moot question whether the technological transfer prohibition will apply even to cruise missile components like guidance systems and computerized mapping. The apparent debate in the United States over this issue presages the wide leeway for interpretations of the non-transfer provisions.<sup>2</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the Soviet Union has offered the *a priori* determination that neither can cruise missiles under 600 kilometers

be deployed in third countries (i.e., NATO states) nor can technology or components of such missiles be transferred to third nations. An article in *Pravda* on February 11, 1978, left no room for misinterpretation of the Soviet position:

It is necessary to lay particular stress on the dangerous nature of attempts to leave loopholes so that cruise missiles can be deployed on the territory of other countries—the United States’ NATO allies first and foremost. This question is part of the overall problem of insuring that the agreement worked out completely excludes the possibility of strategic arms being handed over to third countries, or of the agreement’s being circumvented through the agency of third countries.

Those sentences make it clear that from the Soviet vantage point even the transfer of technology or of manufactured cruise missiles with a range of less than 600 kilometers would be deemed by Moscow violations of the Treaty.

To be sure, this Soviet position clashes with an American interpretation of the no-transfer provisions that is much more favorable to Allied interests. Yet, those Europeans who draw comfort from this overlook a central fact: given the growing Soviet military threat in Europe, the SALT II Treaty should not burden Western Europe with ambiguities that invite future disputes over interpretation and implementation. Perhaps the United States as a world power could afford such disputes with the Soviet Union, but the consequences for an exposed country like the Federal Republic of Germany might be incalculable.

If experience is a teacher, in the event of such a dispute, a loudly declaimed interpretation by the Soviet Union would be enough to convince a good part of the government in Bonn of the need to accept this interpretation. The argument, often advanced in the Federal Republic, that the Europeans would not be involved in a dispute over interpretation of SALT because they are not parties to the Treaty is as legalistic as it is politically naive. In such a contingency, the Soviet Union would not accuse the West European nations of a Treaty violation; rather, Moscow would simply apply massive political pressure and threaten the end of detente. Governments that have loudly announced that there is no alternative to detente could not, by definition, withstand such pressure. A number of developments in the past few years strongly suggest that there is indeed basis for such concern.

But the relevant provisions in SALT II about technology transfer and non-circumvention apply not only to cruise missiles, nor solely to the Federal Republic of Germany. Whether and to what extent the United States would be able to help Great Britain and France in the modernization of their national strategic forces are open questions—and surely controversial ones in light of the Soviet Union’s traditionally restrictive interpretation of Treaty provisions.

(See SALT II, Pg. 4-F)

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SALT II -- CONTINUED*Strategic Stability and "Extended Deterrence"*

However the capabilities of the superpowers may be added up and measured, it seems certain that by the early 1980s a large part of the land-based ICBMs of the United States would not survive a Soviet nuclear strike. The Carter Administration tried to redress this vulnerability in its March 1977 SALT proposal, which sought substantial reductions in the land-based ICBMs of both superpowers. The proposal was rejected peremptorily by Moscow. To be sure, the survivability of the U.S. Minuteman ICBMs, as Defense Secretary Harold Brown put it, is "not exactly the same as the survival of the United States." Nevertheless, a forfeiture of this force certainly would have a more serious meaning than "simply" the amputation of one leg of the U.S. strategic triad.

The debate over this problem in the United States turns around the development and deployment of a new generation of ICBMs. It becomes increasingly clear, however, that the technical arguments obscure more fundamental political and strategic questions. These are questions about the future capability of the United States for crisis management and willingness to risk conflict; about the relationship between military balance and political freedom of action; about the linkage between defense and deterrence; and about the criteria of strategic stability. These are questions primarily for the United States, but they necessarily cast their shadows upon Western Europe as well.

The Carter Administration has marked NATO as a priority of its foreign and security policies—a fact that has been welcomed in Europe. It has emphasized the strengthening of the conventional components of the NATO posture, and this undoubtedly is a most urgent requirement for the Alliance.

Yet NATO cannot subsist on conventional forces alone. The Alliance remains dependent upon a United States nuclear deterrent that is credible in terms of capabilities as well as doctrine. Especially since NATO will be incapable in the foreseeable future of mustering a balancing weight in conventional forces in Europe, the Alliance's strategy, forces and weapons will have to be framed in such a way as to preserve the options of first use of nuclear weapons, nuclear escalation, and flexible and selective targeting. In light of the general perception of a strategic nuclear parity between the superpowers, these options can be vouchsafed only through capabilities that can credibly and durably attest to the ability by the United States to control the process of escalation in the event of a conflict in Europe.

Against this background, the vulnerability of the U.S. arsenal of land-based ICBMs is provoking serious concern. For the foreseeable future, land-based ICBMs represent the most reliable, quickly reactive and accurate strategic weapons, especially in terms of systems applicable to a conflict in Europe. Only survivable ICBMs fill the NATO requirement of keeping open the options of first and selective use of nuclear weapons. Because of a variety of factors, even improved U.S. SLBMs could not adequately substitute for ICBMs in such missions. There

is thus a "legitimate" European stake in the maintenance by the United States of a survivable force of ICBMs.

Other factors enter into this European interest. The prospect that the U.S. Administration could adopt a "launch on assessment" or "launch under attack" doctrine with respect to its vulnerable Minuteman ICBMs can only be disquieting. Such doctrines represent but marginal improvements over a "launch on warning" concept, and in any event portend a highly unstable situation susceptible to accident and error.

Against this background, West Europeans have reacted with a sense of relief to the announced decision of the U.S. Administration to proceed with the development and eventual deployment of modernized MX intercontinental missiles. However, anyone who has followed the internal debate in the United States, particularly the statements of the Administration, cannot skirt the conclusion that the MX decision reflects less the embrace of strategic necessity and more the attempt to entice some opponents of SALT II in the U.S. Senate toward support or at least tolerance of the Treaty. If this conclusion is accurate, then the MX decision is in the truest sense of the word a tactical rather than a strategic decision.

Apparently the U.S. Administration still clings to a belief in the possibility of reciprocal U.S.-Soviet restraint within a solidifying "structure for peace." But the reality is otherwise. Anyone who has objectively analyzed the progressive global engagement of the Soviet Union in the past several years, the deliberate creation of regional imbalances, and above all the massive Soviet strategic arms effort is pushed toward some inescapable conclusions: namely, that the Soviet Union does not accept the U.S.-propagated concept of mutual deterrence; that Moscow in no way sees strategic stability as synonymous with strategic nuclear parity between the superpowers; that rather the USSR defines its own security strictly in terms of military superiority; and that therefore a durable condition of parity, which is the declared aim of SALT, is illusory. The "bottom line" is that he who does not want to accept Soviet supremacy must engage in an arms race—with or without SALT.

It is always at once fascinating and frightening for Europeans to witness the efforts by Americans to interpret Soviet behavior. Apparently the current generation of Americans in policy positions, having reached maturity in a period of clear U.S. superiority, has difficulty in imagining a world in which matters would be reversed. Regrettably West Europeans know otherwise. They have lived already for years in the shadow of clear Soviet military superiority on the European continent. Although Europeans are conscious of their alliance with what is still the strongest power on earth, nevertheless the immediate proximity of a massively superior potential adversary leaves an ever deepening imprint on West European policies.

It is in this subtle context that one must grasp the meaning of military superiority in the waning decades of the twentieth century. The mili-

(See SALT II, Pg. 5-F)

## SALT II -- CONTINUED

tary power of the Soviet Union is not likely to be directly invoked except under condition of massive Soviet superiority—and probably not even then. Nevertheless, the political impact of Soviet military superiority sets in on the day when U.S. policymakers can no longer look confidently toward prevailing in a possible military confrontation with the Soviet Union. To be sure, a sense of national strength is still prevalent in the United States. It is uncertain, however, how responsible Americans—and the public at large—will react to unequivocal evidence of Soviet superiority in important realms of the strategic balance.

Much more certain is the fate that would befall Western Europe in the event of America's descent into strategic inferiority. In that event, the direction for Western Europe would be predetermined. The direction would not be toward a unification of the free nations of Europe, as continues to be erroneously assumed by Americans who are unfamiliar with the political realities of Western Europe. What would ensue, rather, would be a race by the West European nations for accommodation with Moscow.

Americans should entertain no illusions on this score. The United States itself conceivably may be able to weather periods in which elements of Soviet strategic superiority will be clearly recognizable. But Western Europe could not endure such a "double inferiority." The United States, in casting its strategic decisions, therefore, must always take into account the protective requirements of the entire Alliance. An American "minimum deterrent" might protect the United States; it would not safeguard the Alliance.

*The Mirage of SALT III*

At least in Europe nowadays—and especially when arguments stray into difficulty—there inevitably comes a reference to "SALT III." This applies particularly to so-called Eurostrategic nuclear weapons of continental range. SALT III has somehow become a kind of strategic Nirvana, where all problems concerning such weapons will be magically solved.

Unfortunately such happy assumptions do not correspond to reality. Today there are hard notions about neither the participants in, nor the substantive agenda of, SALT III. The very fact that SALT III has already been designated the repository of issues that could not be solved in SALT I and SALT II suggests that, if anything, the third round will prove more difficult than its two predecessors with respect to procedural as well as substantive issues. Expectations for SALT III range from deep cuts in the opposing Eurostrategic arsenals down to simply a "freeze" of existing capabilities. Be that as it may, the fear already is making the rounds in Europe that certain SALT II provisions may seriously compromise the West's position in SALT III.

This holds above all for "gray area" nuclear systems. The one-sided limitations on cruise

missiles in the SALT II Protocol offer the Soviet Union an obvious pretext for claiming (as Moscow has already done on more than one occasion) that these limitations already are an integral part of the SALT II accords, and that cruise missiles therefore are no longer grist for the bargaining process in SALT III. If this interpretation should prevail, then the only contending assets in long-range theater nuclear capabilities remaining to SALT III would be the forward based systems (FBS) on the NATO side and the SS-20 IRBMs and tactical aircraft (including the Backfire bombers) on the Warsaw Pact side.

Merely the relative quantitative dimensions of these contending bargaining assets render it highly unlikely that the West could emerge from the negotiations with anything resembling a favorable outcome. The rhetoric that has been devoted of late to SALT III, especially in European governmental circles, is thus revealing. It shows that no one really has come to grips in a serious way even with a possible NATO negotiating position. To the contrary: Through its so-called Option III in the Vienna negotiations for Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions in Europe (MBFR), NATO created yet another barrier to a redressive solution of the Eurostrategic imbalance.

If, therefore, the cruise missile limitations in the SALT II Protocol should prove prejudicial in SALT III—and if NATO does not move quickly in the meantime to deploy Eurostrategic weapons systems other than cruise missiles—then the West will find itself reduced to a SALT III negotiating position that could realistically aim at best at cementing the existing imbalance in theater nuclear capabilities.

To be sure, there are still some "sorcerer's apprentices" on both sides of the Atlantic who believe that NATO can somehow use weapons options and weapons blueprints as bargaining chips against actually deployed Warsaw Pact capabilities. Anyone with even a casual knowledge of the record of arms control negotiations thus far, however, realizes that in that business "software" has absolutely no chance against hardware.

*At a Strategic Crossroads*

Whoever has seriously studied the current strategic nuclear equation on the one hand, and the conspicuously contrasting dynamics behind the strategic arms policies of the two superpowers on the other hand, must reach a pregnant conclusion. That conclusion is that the evolution in the relationship between the two superpowers has reached a stage in which not only the U.S.-Soviet force equation will be determined over at least the next decade, but where in more meaningful terms the mold will be cast for the entire international system of the future.

Once again, as a number of times before in the past century, the hopes of Europeans in a critical hour are directed to the United States.

## NOTES

1. *The Economist*, February 3, 1979, p. 21.
2. See *SALT II: An Interim Assessment*, Report of the Panel on the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty of the Subcom-

mittee on Intelligence and the Military Application of Nuclear Energy, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, 95th Congress, 2nd Sess., December 23, 1978.

1. SALT I prohibited conversion of "light" ICBM launchers into "heavy" ones. The U.S. wanted to be more specific, and the two delegation heads initialed an Agreed Interpretation saying that "the dimensions [remember that word] of land-based ICBM silo launchers will not be significantly increased." But what is "significant"? In a separate "Common Understanding" the sides agreed that "an increase will not be greater than 10 to 15 per cent of the present dimensions of land-based launchers." The U.S. wanted a specific quantitative definition, but the USSR refused, arguing that the "Common Understanding" was sufficient. So, the U.S. issued one of several "Unilateral Statements" which set out a quantitative base approximately equal to the volume of the existing SS-11, which was later rounded off to 70 cubic meters.

In 1974, the USSR began to deploy the SS-19, with a volume of over 100 cubic meters - between 50 per cent and 60 per cent over our unilateral baseline. Was this a violation? No, because the baseline was unilateral. But was it even incompatible with a 15 per cent increase in dimensions? Not if a 15 per cent increase in dimensions (not volume) is interpreted to mean an increase in length and breadth, which would permit an increase up to 52 per cent in volume. Technically, there was no violation; but, more importantly, there was no meeting of the minds. Although the U.S. had tried to reach an understanding, the USSR had refused. Why? Clearly because it had plans which it would not share with us and which took priority over an agreed definition of size.

2. The 1972 ABM treaty prohibited testing air defense radar in an "ABM mode." Unable to get Soviet agreement on a definition, the U.S. unilaterally defined this to mean, "at an altitude inconsistent with i.e., [too high for] interception of targets against which air defenses are deployed." The object was to prevent the sly upgrading of surface-to-air anti-aircraft capability to anti-ballistic-missile capability. During 1973 and 1974 the Soviet tested SA-5s and radars in an "ABM mode" but, when queried, replied blandly it had only been practicing permitted "range safety and instrumentation on an ABM range." Who is to know, without verification of the ground? Hide-and-seek. We can't be sure the Soviet SAM anti-aircraft system is not being used as a womb for gestation of an ABM system. Vagueness has its uses.

3. One more example. "Current or additionally agreed ABM ranges" were exempted from the ABM treaty. In 1975, the USSR established a new ABM radar range at the Kamchatka impact area without "obtaining additional agreement." Violation? The background is more interesting than the question of violation. At the time of negotiation, the United States, playing its customary role of pressing for open precision, gave the USSR a list of American and known Soviet ABM ranges, not including Kamchatka. Although by acknowledging its existence the USSR could automatically have gained legal exemption for Kamchatka, Moscow, in its customary posture of hardline secrecy, refused to acknowledge or deny the validity of the list commenting only that each side's own capability for technical verification should "prevent any misunderstanding." In other words, "We accept your information on

your installations and on what you know about ours, but we will not confirm. Find it if you can, but we won't tell." Hide-and-seek.

When taxed in 1975 to comment on the new radar in Kamchatka, the USSR coolly responded that there had been a radar range in Kamchatka all along (we knew there had been an old one, which didn't count under the 1972 criteria). Now however, in 1975, when confronted directly, the USSR said it was quite content to have Kamchatka exempted under the ABM treaty. But the Soviets had been unwilling to acknowledge it in 1972 when the treaty was signed! Another deliberate refusal to cooperate in establishing a mutually recognized baseline for enforcing the treaty.

In all three cases the failure to achieve a meeting of the minds was contrived by the USSR to preserve its freedom to maneuver and conceal its intentions while accepting our unilateral statements of our intentions. Sophomoric negotiation on our part - but it also reflects the yawning gap between U.S. and Soviet views of SALT. It reveals how Soviet SALT I negotiations were animated by an aggressive strategy calculated to meet the Soviets' plans for developing new weapons to carry out their strategy.

Norman B. Hannah, U.S. Foreign Service, retired.  
National Review, June 22, 1979



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SALT II and Europe

In the hearings on SALT II before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last month a constant theme both from those giving testimony and from various members of the Committee itself - a theme, moreover, heavily stressed in the American press - was that America's European allies were deeply concerned that the Treaty should come into force. Secretary Vance spoke in this sense, and George W. Ball, for example, asserted that "on the whole, I think a rejection would certainly increase European doubts as to our competence and reliability as a leader and could, in the longer term, weaken our whole system of cooperation and common effort".. and that rejection "... would certainly reinforce European doubts as to our steadiness on course and thus our reliability as Europe's main defense". John A. Armitage said that "...a rejection of SALT II will be regarded by Europeans as a basic change in U.S. - Soviet policy - away from an attempt to contain Soviet expansionism while offering the prospect of improved relations under appropriate conditions - and toward a policy of unrestrained confrontation with primary emphasis on the military rivalry. Europeans will not wish to join us on that path." And so forth .... General Haig, it is true, made the point that the Europeans in fact had many qualms about it, and Eugene V. Rostow was most realistic. Nevertheless, generally speaking, the fact that we and others

do not wish to appear to be intervening in an American political quarrel has not only let our case go by default, but has given the impression that we enthusiastically favour the Treaty.

In fact, how could this be? For even if American critics of SALT were wrong, and it did in fact provide for equality in strategic weapons between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., that would amount to their cancelling out, leaving NATO in Europe in a position of gross inferiority.

Since these American voices have now so strongly asserted our approval, I would feel that HMG should put our qualms directly to the American government; or even express them publicly, say in an interview with a prominent American correspondent. That is, unless the Foreign Office has somehow persuaded itself that SALT does not have these consequences: in which case our political leadership should surely tell them to think again.

The very least we should demand, surely, is the reinstatement of the neutron bomb. - The fact that the Russians launched a massive propaganda campaign against it, as against no other weapon in the Allied armoury, is indication enough that their major current aim is the effective disarmament of NATO.

Beyond that, there seems a very good case for a major Prime Ministerial speech in the next month or two, on the need - especially in view of the SS-20 and the Backfire bomber - to develop an independent European deterrent.

*R. C. [Signature]*

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A recent (and very experienced) visitor to the USSR, Professor Robert F. Byrnes, tells us that :

"... the ignorance to be found among even educated citizens of Moscow and events within the Soviet Union and of Soviet policy elsewhere is overwhelming, and constitutes, again, a chronic handicap to the Soviet government. No Soviet citizen I met was at all well informed about the Soviet budget, the size of the Soviet armed forces, the number of Soviet troops in various Eastern European countries and the problems those countries face, or about Soviet policies with regard to SALT, the Middle East, Africa, or the other areas of critical concern throughout the world. Indeed, the misinformation poured upon the Soviet people by all the media makes one yearn for old-fashioned ignorance ..."

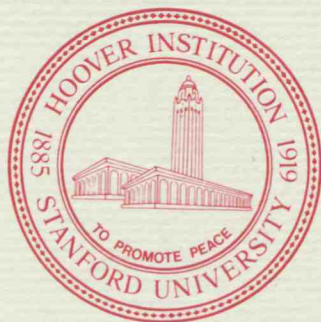
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**The Role of the Intellectual  
in International Misunderstanding**

by Robert Conquest  
Senior Research Fellow



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W. Glenn Campbell  
Director

Hoover Institution on War, Revolution  
and Peace  
Stanford University  
Stanford, California 94305 U.S.A.

Robert Conquest

# The Role of the Intellectual

## *in International misunderstanding*

IT WILL NOT be my concern to retail particular scandals in the intellectual and academic involvement in foreign affairs. I am not compiling a *sottisier* of idiotic remarks made by particular professors, which would indeed be a cruel, but all too easy pastime, under George Orwell's dictum: "You have to be a member of the intelligentsia to believe things like that—no ordinary man could be such a fool. . . ." I seek, rather, to trace the fundamental attitudes which, on the whole, lead intellectuals, and academics in particular, to misinterpret the world scene. This is not, of course, to censure all who have ever served in universities, but merely to indicate generally disqualifying elements in the intellectual-academic approach, or rather temperament, which are responsible for much that is unreal in accepted thinking about international matters.

First, the academic is afflicted, like all of us, with the problem of making the effort of the intellect and the imagination not to project his or our ideas of common sense or natural motivation on to the products of totally different cultures. If it is worse, usually, in the case of the intellectual, that is partly because he systematises the error more strongly, partly because he has also devised means of misunderstanding his *own* culture. The citizenry as such (unless misled) often nourish fairly sound attitudes based on instinct or memory. Inadequacy in understanding the real world is most marked among educated people, including many of those who consider themselves exceptionally qualified to discuss or write of foreign politics.

The crux of the international scene today is a relationship between different political cultures, the histories, attitudes, and beliefs of each of which are radically alien to those of the other. As early as 1946, T. S. Eliot wrote in an extraordinarily perceptive essay introducing *The Dark Side of the Moon*:

"We are, in fact, in a period of conflict between cultures—a conflict which finds the older cultures in a position of disadvantage: from lack of confidence in themselves, from divisions both internal and between each other, from the inheritance of old abuses from the past aggravated by abuses due to the hasty introduction of novelties. The Liberal . . . assumes . . . that the cultural conflict is one which can, like political conflict, be adjusted by compromise, or, like the religious conflict, be resolved by tolerance. . . . The frantic attempt, either through assembling representatives of more and more nations in public, or through discussions between leaders of fewer and fewer nations in private, to find a political solution to what is not merely a political problem, can . . . only lead to temporary and illusory benefits, unless the deeper problem is faced and pondered."

The present world is, moreover, extraordinary in containing, in the extreme and sensitive contiguity produced by modern arms and modern communication, these states and political cultures of such fundamentally divergent types.

In his Nobel Prize speech, Alexander Solzhenitsyn noted in one of his most penetrating insights, that in the old days disparate cultures were physically separated. Men were "guided by their own experiences in their circumscribed localities, in their community, in their society, and lastly, on their national territory. Then it was still possible for a single pair of eyes to perceive and accept some common scale of values." The differences between distant cultures were only known by report and to a few travellers; and they were so overt and extravagant at the most apparent level that they did not invite any insular judgment. Padishah or Peacock Throne were instantly recognisable as alien. Secretary-

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General or Trade Union Congress sound like the titles and institutions, with their associated attitudes, of the Western world. Nowadays, Solzhenitsyn points out, mankind has become "united", not in the old natural way of communities, but simply in a crude physical sense, with instant communication all over the planet of all superficial information, while at the same time "people in various places apply their own tried and tested scale of values to events, and insist self-confidently and stubbornly on judging only by their own scale."

MY CENTRAL POINT is not so much that people misunderstand other people, or that cultures misunderstand other cultures, but that they do not realise this to be the case. They assume that the light of their own parochial common sense is enough. And they frame policies based on illusions. Yet, how profound is this difference between political cultures and between the motivations of different political traditions; and how deep-set and how persistent these attitudes are!

The contrast between the Soviet despotic culture and the Western civic culture is the current crux, but it needs to be seen on a world historical perspective. Political Man in different systems is not just basically the same creature holding different theoretical opinions, but rather a life-form which has evolved into radically different phyla, each with deep-set attitudes, historically determined over long periods (and subject to natural selection as between different temperamental groups). So that, for example, the present Marxist-Leninist ruling elements in the USSR are actually unable to see the world under categories different from their own. They are the product of a political culture, and nourish a political psychology, quite different from our own. They—and their motivations and probable actions—are not to be understood by projecting on to them our own notions of natural behaviour. The centuries-old tradition of post-Mongol Russia produced a system of unlimited despotism, with a tendency to universal expansionism. This was somewhat modified by two generations of Europeanisation after 1860. But this Western tendency was destroyed by the Revolution which, moreover, grafted on to the old despotic tradition a newer messianic revolutionary despotism with explicit pretence to world rule.

CULTURES HAVE HAD, as they still have, enormous intrinsic momentum, and they cannot be rapidly turned in new directions. Just as the roots of Russian political attitudes derive from the time of the Mongol invasion, the Western civic

culture is to be traced back, in spite of vast changes, to "tribal" times. In these "civic" cultures the polity is articulated and decisions are made in accord (in principle at least) with a balance of interests, through consultation with and acceptance by various sections of the community, while in the "despotic" cultures the decisions are taken by a single man or a single group and the population is merely a passive element.

This is not the only way to look at the development of society. But from the point of view of the most substantial and dangerous differences between current forms of polity, it is the crucial one.

THIS APPROACH INVOLVES treating the matter in a rather different light than has been usual. For example, the "civic" culture, though containing the possibility of democracy, is not necessarily "democratic." And though containing the potentiality of the "open society", it is not in itself or necessarily so definable.

The despotic type of culture divides naturally into two general types. First, the traditional "imperial" system in which it is assumed that the true form of the state has already been achieved; and, secondly, the messianic revolutionary type which seeks by an act of will to bring history to an eschatologically predetermined conclusion. The history of the latter tradition expressed itself at different periods in the most highly regarded terminology of the time—as Theology in the 16th Century, as Reason in the 18th, and as Science in the 19th and the 20th, each being in fact a closed and false "scientism"—but each appealing, in turn, to the intellectual of the time.

The present situation is, of course, "unique", like all previous situations; and the particular polities now existing equally have their own singular and specific characteristics. Nevertheless, there is nothing novel about the existence of a civic culture in some countries and a despotic one in others; nor, among the latter, of the temporary emergence of political orders claiming the "Messianic" power to bring history to its Final End. Present ones may seem novel to us, but only because they have not, in the immediately preceding epoch, played much of a role on the world scene; and also because the present-day language of political eschatology is couched in terms which, on the surface, seem to be assimilated to certain political dialects of the established civic cultures, and even—by a logical confusion—to constitute no more than an extreme and total case of ideas operating normally in the civic order.

It is not easy to get into another man's skin,

let alone that of another culture. The great Condé once remarked (to Cardinal de Retz), about historians, that the reason they got things wrong was,

*"Ces coquins nous font parler et agir comme ils auroient fait eux-mêmes à notre place."*

He noted, in fact, that academics of his own culture could not, or at any rate had not, made the effort adequately. When it comes to alien cultures, the immodesty of anthropologists and social historians who believe that they have got into the essence of a society is a constant trap. The poet Louis MacNeice, who was also a Professor of Greek and deeply versed in ancient Athens, could nevertheless write:

*And how one can imagine oneself among them  
I do not know.  
It was all so unimaginably different,  
And all so long ago.*

And this is Athens! Incomparably closer to us in many ways than most of the other ancient cultures, and many modern ones.

AND YET THE EFFORT must be made. And when it comes to modern alien cultures, no understanding (and so no policy) will be worth anything until academics, statesmen, and all others concerned make that effort, to the degree that unreal assumptions are driven even from their almost unconscious first thoughts on affairs. After that, they need, it may be suggested, to master the idea that these deep-set forces of motivation are not merely very strange to us, but cannot easily be changed by argument or manipulation. Macaulay writes of the French Revolution that "had six generations of Englishmen passed away without a single session of Parliament" then we too would have needed years of blood and confusion "to learn the very rudiments of political science," and been equally duped by childish theories, and have equally "sought refuge from anarchy in despotism, and been again driven from despotism into anarchy." Six generations—even though France had by no means become totally uncivic, and had started not too far from the English style—were needed to produce this measure of de-civification. Even Marx talks of fifty years being necessary to teach his "proletariat" to rule, while the Maoists have spoken in terms of a hundred or two hundred years as the time required to change social attitudes in a truly radical way. At any rate, we must avoid being too sanguine about the early blossoming of new cultural styles in areas where history has rooted others.

IN ALL REALISM, meanwhile, we must note that the actual state of Western academic and political attitudes on such issues is by no means satisfactory. In particular, we may find that the current tendencies, excessive by all previous civic standards, to use the power of the Western executive arm in vast fields of internal affairs previously controlled by the communities, or guided rather than controlled, has imported into the Western political thought and action attitudes which dispose its formulators to think—wrongly—that the revolutionary polities are doing the same sort of thing. It would not be the first time that a sort of bureaucratic sympathy has determined attitudes. Lord Acton's controversy with Archbishop Creighton—with the Catholic historian attacking, and the Anglican defending the atrocities of the early Popes—is convincingly attributed by Lytton Strachey to Creighton's instinctive sympathy with administrators dealing with refractory problems (with the stake and the rack rather appearing as side issues).

In a somewhat different vein, academics in the West, particularly to the extent they are cut off from "real" politics, are more than ordinarily inclined to systematising in concept, and "planning" in policy, beyond what the subject will bear. This, too, leads to a tendency to see in totalist schemes just a variety of systematic politics.

And, of course, these ideas are not confined to the intellectual world, but seep down, in even more debased form, to a larger audience. Serious-minded housewives by the millions absorb masses of horror-sociology put out by Parrot Paperbacks.

### The Etatist Fallacy

ONE SORT OF POLITICAL ACADEMIC sees "problems", works out "solutions", and then turns to an agency for putting them into effect: the state. The idea that there are any limitations in principle to what the state, properly empowered, can do seems to evaporate. Yet this is to venture into action which time and again—and not necessarily through any malice—has brought the civic society into danger. Moreover, while to effect changes that go with the grain of a culture is comparatively easy, to the intellectual one abstract change is as good as another, and depends solely on its formal advantages.

In its most important aspect, the civic order is that which has created a strong state while still maintaining the principle of consensus which existed in primitive society.

There is a hierarchy of types among the social animals. Lowest come the colonial invertebrates, such as the corals, in which polyp buds off from polyp, remaining connected by filaments of tissue, with each polyp serving in various specialised functions, such as tentacles or stomachs, almost as if forming a single animal, but with no individual sphere of action at all. The social insects are not physically connected, but are linked by communication—mainly odours—and have very limited individual flexibility, though the individual can survive for a time in isolation. The social animals, like baboons, have far more individuality, recognise each other as individuals, and can play a variety of roles, sometimes in rotation. Human beings go further still in the same direction, in various obvious ways.

One may similarly note the hierarchy of human societies, in which the lowest give the least scope to individual action, the least variation in attitudes, and the narrowest limits to opinion.

For let me insist that the *Civic* order is of a higher and more developed type than the *Despotic*, and that the carrying through of the older adjustments into the higher form of state organisation is a remarkable feat, a continual and fruitful dialectic of the tendencies of state power and the interests and rights of individuals and groups. It has only been achieved by the Western-type culture. And the tradition has been maintained continually, with occasional lurches and recoveries, through Anglo-Saxon times right back, presumably, to the prehistoric originals.

The Germanic nations which came to Britain had various political customs. The Angles had had kings for several centuries but the Saxons did not. All the Saxon "townships" had their own rulers, and general meetings were held once a year

"where the leaders met with twelve nobles and as many freedmen and bondmen from each township. There they confirmed the laws, judged important legal cases, and agreed upon the plans that would guide them in peace or war during the coming year..."<sup>1</sup>

The piece-meal movement of the Mercian occupation, the comparatively peaceful incorporation of British populations, provided much flexibility. Settlements varied from military colonies—mainly directed against the North-

umberlands—to groups of individuals, groups following chieftains, individual farms; and the same is true, to a lesser degree, of other parts of England.

THE EFFECT ON THE American political culture of the special circumstances of the Frontier has, of course, been much discussed since the end of the last century. The idea of the determining effect of small Western communities owing a general allegiance to government on the East coast, but beyond its effective protection and compelled to rely on their own common initiative, clearly has much to be said for it in accounting for the special circumstances of American democracy. It is interesting to reflect that this was in a sense a re-enactment of the original spread of the English settlers in Britain. That, too, was on the whole, piece-meal. It was only after considerable areas had been settled for some time that they "sent for kings" to the Continent—which is to say, under the circumstances, organised themselves into States.

In both the English and the American cases, it was not, of course, a matter of traditionless man evolving broad new administrative forms to suit the circumstances. Both Americans and Saxons built their new communities on the basis of the traditional laws and rights as they remembered them. In England from that time on, as a historian of the period has put it,

"From Pagan and Mercian times onward, custom has expected that men of suitable standing should be heard before decision is reached; society has frequently disagreed about which men should be heard when, but when it has reached agreement, governments that ignored agreed opinion have been denied obedience and revenue."<sup>2</sup>

Local tenures and local institutions "trained English society to respect governments that coordinate and to discipline governments that rule by command."

THESE ATTITUDES MAINTAINED the flexibility of our society, with an easier movement of ideas and smoother social change than was possible in most of Europe. Above all, it became possible to correct a powerful central government, which was still obliged to observe the restraints of custom. "Time and effort shaped a tradition of firm leadership and light rule."

Generally speaking, great and successful rulers in England have been those (like Edward I and Edward III) who worked within the laws and customs, sought cooperation rather than sub-

mission from the representatives of the cities and counties. In turn, from the Magna Carta on, the community rarely called into question the essential powers of the executive—though particular Kings might be, and were, removed. These were those who sought to extend the power of the state at the expense of the community (as under John, Edward II, Richard III, and James II). And the balance in each case was restored by a constitutionalist counter-revolution.

For the civic tradition of Britain has fairly often in the past been faced by more dynamic, more modern, "waves of the future." In Yorkist times, the attempt was made to install in England a streamlined, Renaissance-style despotism (complete with the torture and treachery of the Sforzas and the Borgias). In Stuart times came the attempt to turn England into one of the new Divine Right monarchies on the French model, again to the accompaniment of illegality and torture.

The point is that an executive can be strong without being intrusive into areas in which the community, or a large part of it, resents its presence. This is the key distinction to be made between Elizabeth I and her successors. To say that the Tudor state was as dominant as that of the Stuarts is to miss the essential. Generally speaking it did not—and the Stuarts did—try to impose itself in areas of life (including the economic) which the community thought inappropriate. The state monopolies of James I's time may remind us strongly of similar state operations in Britain in the past generation. This is true even to the extent of the appointment to leading positions in them (accompanied by peerages) of prominent adherents of the executive power.

FOR THE CENTRALISING ELEMENT, always necessary, has lately again shown signs of escaping from popular judgment. Perhaps this is seen less when it comes to major matters than in a tendency to override interests in favour of overall economic or other efficiency. This is an old story, and certainly represents or includes one of the great social problems of the forthcoming period. What is clear, at any rate, is that it is only within the Western order that there is any prospect of the administrators and centralisers being criticised and controlled. All notion that this can be done in some other fashion—i.e. by a "revolutionary dictatorship"—is a leap from a mildly uncomfortable frying pan into a particularly hot type of fire.

Nevertheless the "sovereignty of Parliament", itself in practice tending to mean the sovereignty of the Prime Minister exerted through his "Whips", has been taken to dogmatic extremes, with Parliament being made to take action in

spheres in which no doubt it is theoretically competent, but which in practice is destructive of civic society. The famous resolution of 1780 that the powers of the executive "have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished" is once again applicable. For, as Dr Thomas Sowell recently put it (in the *New York Times Magazine*):

"The grand delusion of contemporary liberals [I would say of contemporary étatistes in general] is that they have both the right and the ability to move their fellow creatures around like blocks of wood—and that the end results will be no different than if people had voluntarily chosen the same actions."

It does not seem so far-fetched to suggest that this trend to excessive centralisation involves some trace of fellow-feeling with—and hence amiable illusions about—the despotic cultures proper; just as the Stuart phase of executive usurpation went with a certain rallying to Bourbon tyranny on the Continent. At least some feeling of Burinern solidarity seems to play a certain role in recent academic tendencies to underrate the profound and principled hostility of the Communist culture to our own.

Thus we get the "liberal" idea that there is nothing wrong with executive solutions to every sort of social and even moral problem; and hence that the revolutionary is really just a sort of rather impatient liberal—a fatal romanticising of what Richard Henry Lee defines as "the fickle and the ardent, the right instruments for despotism." It would be a very sanguine topologist who would welcome Alexander the Great as a fellow-professional on the grounds of his having solved the problem of the Gordian knot.

### The Systematisation Fallacy

THE KEY WORD in modern studies of politics is "model." With its overtones of something that works in the same way as its original, e.g. a model steam-engine, it is highly inappropriate. A modest and realistic word like "sketch" would be more suitable, in not giving the impression that the model-maker has, at least in essentials, mastered the workings of his original. He never has. Politics are *sui generis*. And though they may be conveniently treated under general categories for many purposes, the description of the elements involved must not be pressed beyond what is possible and appropriate, in this or in any other field where rigour is impossible.

<sup>1</sup> "Hucbald. Vita LeGuini", in *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae: Scriptores* (ed. Pertz and Mommsen, Hannover-Berlin, 1826).

<sup>2</sup> John Morris, *The Age of Arthur* (1973), p. 504.

The contrary tradition of Aristotle, which normally proceeds from the actual state of affairs, seems preferable.

"In studying this subject we must be content if we attain as high a degree of certainty as the matter of it admits. . . . Such being the nature of our subject and such our way of arguing in our discussions of it, we must be satisfied with a rough outline of the truth, and for the same reason we must be content with broad conclusions."

The open society is in fact the actual result of the absence of a belief in rigorous political science. As the late Nicola Chiaromonte once put it, it is the most perverse of all modern ideas—though similar notions go back a long way—that "the course of things must have a single meaning. . . or that events can be contained in a single system." Judgments in political matters may be made in simple terms and be none the worse for that. Churchill understood the Nazis better than Chamberlain did, not because he had a vast apparatus of "political science" verbosity to analyse it, but because he had some knowledge of history, and of evil. I remember after the Hungarian Revolution in October 1956 the TV interview with Professor Peter Wiles, who had chanced to be in Budapest at the time. Asked what, in his view, were the causes of that revolution, he answered simply: "They were fed up with telling lies."

Bismarck once told the Prussian Chamber: "*Die Politik ist keine exakte Wissenschaft.*" It was only at about this time in the 1860s that such a remark was evidently beginning to be necessary. German academics who had, as they thought, systematised most other fields of knowledge, were now treating history and politics as though these too could be brought within a set of formulae, developing a tradition which had only recently become dominant, though going back to such aberrations, two hundred years previously, as Leibnitz's extraordinary "mathematical proof" that the Count Palatine of Neuburg must win the Polish throne (*Specimen demonstrationum politicarum pro eligendo rege Polonorum*, 1664).

It has been one of the marks of our time that the prestige of the physical and other genuine sciences has been so great that other studies have wished to share it. Unfortunately, it is not as easy to introduce the scientific rigours into areas from which the information is as yet greatly insufficient for such structures. As a result, in psychology, sociology, linguistics, literary criticism, etc., inflated theorisings have been treated as though they were established doctrine. The

position is roughly that of phrenology in the last century. A complicated (and, on the face of it, sophisticated) methodology was used to study phenomena which appeared to be directly related to the subject, but from which in practice absolutely no useful information could really be extracted. Physiognomy was also developed as a "science" by Lavater. Norman Douglas in his *Siren Land* effectively ridicules the attempts by its practitioners to deduce many contradictory characteristics from a bust of Tiberius—which as it happened was probably not of the Emperor Tiberius at all.

YET THE ACADEMIC MIND cannot be kept from premature theory. Behaviourism, Systems Analysis—and no doubt soon Catastrophe Theory—arise elsewhere and are applied one by one to politics.

The word "system" is so general that it can be used in any field from nuclear weaponry to elementary education, and thus leads to the assumption that the ideas of design, engineering, and analysis suitable to the one can be applied to the other. As Dr Ida Hoos has commented,

"In the real world there appears to be about as much justification for committing society's sundry malfunctioning systems to the care of a systems analyst whose sole claim to expertise is technical as to call a hydraulic engineer to cure an ailing heart because his speciality is pumping systems. Although the term 'system' can be applied to both space hardware and social problems, the inputs are vastly different, as are the controls and objectives. In the engineered system, the components are tangible, the variables controlled, and the outputs identifiable. In the social sphere, the crucial elements often defy definition and control and do not behave according to a set of rules. There is no quality control of a social system; the test of its effectiveness is to a large extent a reflection of values and it is certainly not amenable to mathematical measurement. . . ."

Resemblances of form rather than of intent or actual activity tend to mislead. A wolf has a very close resemblance, physiologically speaking, to a basset hound. Its reaction to a pat on the head, however, is different. A death camp is "structured", both physically and operationally, very much like a holiday camp. Two identically structured cars may present different dangers if one is driven by an alcoholic psychopath. The Roman Empire had the same structure under Nero and under Vespasian, under Gallienus and under Aurelian.

The same objection applies to all premature systematising. The success of conceptual and mathematical rigour in the fields in which it can be applied—for example, in the engineering triumphs which go into the Apollo spacecraft—must be distinguished severely from the failure in areas where an alleged scientific or rigorous system has been applied, but where the rigour is in fact inapplicable. The failure of scientific sociologists in putting vast sums of money into Poverty Programmes, which have not done anything to alleviate poverty (except to some degree among the bureaucracy), is matched by the failure of Robert McNamara's military academics with their computerised science of war, its escalations and responses.

AND THIS DISASTER, in 1966, was little more than a repeat of 1916, when the entire Western European culture was severely shaken, if not nearly destroyed. The major villain then was Field Marshal von Falkenhayn, the "most scientific" general who ever ruined his country, as Liddell Hart significantly remarked, who put into effect a calculated method of winning the war for Germany. The arts of strategy were forgotten, the uncertainties of the battlefield dismissed. The French Army was to be destroyed not even by attempting a breakthrough, but by attacking a position which the French must defend at all costs and where they would "bleed to death" whether the objective—Verdun—was captured or not. This was to be done simply by a scientific concentration of weaponry which could not be matched within the narrow French salient. The result was the great 10-month battle of 1916 with its 700,000 dead or missing on a 10-mile front. It is true that the French Army was never the same again, but nor was the German. The only net German gain for one-third of a million dead was "the acquisition of a piece of raddled land little larger in area than the combined Royal Parks in London. . . ."

Generally speaking, attempts by the new schools of political sciences to introduce "rigour" into the subject are comparably fallacious, and hence dangerous if taken seriously (and if not, a notable waste of money). An attempt is reported to analyse problems of international *détente* by feeding 1200 factors into a computer. Such readily numericised factors do not exist. At best, there are numbers of infinite variables and of unknowns.

THE NOTION that everything can be reduced to mathematical manipulation is in any case basically mistaken. We do not even have a general mathematical solution to the *three-body* problem, which can only be solved by progressive approximation. Again, as we all know, it has long since

been proved by Gödel that some problems are in principle insoluble, mathematically speaking. But more generally, we should consider the fact that it is impossible to design a computer that could cover all the potentialities of a chess game. For it can be shown that such a computer would need more units than there can be particles in the entire universe. And chess has rules in the sense that international politics does not.

In all areas of historical and anthropological investigation genuine scholars have progressively abandoned theories of linear development and the older attempts to attain generality by the selection and inflation of often superficial similarities as "essential." On the other hand, at a certain theoretical level worthless generalisation is still rampant—nowhere more than in "political science." It is for the most part evident to serious students that (except in a very short-range sense) predictability in the political and social field is both in principle and in practice unattainable, at any rate by the weak and fallible general theories at present in existence. The urge to premature and inadequately supported generality is—far from being a higher development—a sure sign of primitivism.

In so far as they retain the element of intellectual rigour which makes them liable to refutation on empirical and evidential grounds, they are invariably so refuted. In so far as they are irrefutable, it is precisely because they are so general and flexible as to convey no real information. In that case, why do they emerge? We are plainly in the presence not of an intellectual but of a psychological phenomenon.

How did the contrary delusion which so frequently falsifies views of our politics, and those of international politics, ever arise? It is, at any rate, an astonishing tribute to the power and persistence of the desire for tidiness and certitude.

### The Rationality Fallacy

CRITICAL THOUGHT on politics, beginning with the pre-Socratics, provides another contrast between our society and the despotisms, and at the same time another way for the academic to go wrong.

The Western type of society, just as it managed to create a strong state without destroying the consensual, managed to contain the critical attitude without destroying the older, less "rational" loyalties. In this it was invariably, though naturally, hampered by minds devoted to the attempt to conceptualise, rationalise, and verbalise everything—that is, generally speaking, academics and members of early-teenage debating societies, right from the time of the sophists and



their pupils. These envisaged the post-critical society as one in which every view or decision is the product of pure reason, with the old half-conscious bonds and myths uniting that society treated as null and negligible. But in fact the bonds of social order did not become a hundred per cent conscious, nor could they, any more than the development by the human animal of the consciousness or self-awareness by which he distinguishes himself from other species in any way eliminated the personal unconscious.

Political civilisation subsists both at a rational level, and at a depth beyond present—perhaps any—analysis, as with all the unsterile human attitudes: as with successful art appealing (as A. E. Housman puts it) “to something in man which is obscure and latent, something older than the present organisation of his nature, like the patches of fen which still linger here and there in the drained lands of Cambridgeshire. . . .”

For political civilisation consists of attachment to (or rather a less conscious rooting in) the tradition of generations. It is a libertarian attitude, and a modern one in that it is open to the seeking of undogmatic solutions to unforeseen problems. But it is a modern style which has not (or not yet) deprived itself of the barbarous strength of the ancient loyalties, and which cannot survive if it does. As Orwell said, in World War II (in his “Wells, Hitler and the World State”):

“What has kept England on its feet during the past year? In part, no doubt, some vague idea about a better future, but chiefly the atavistic emotion of patriotism, the ingrained feeling of the English-speaking peoples that they are superior to foreigners. For the last twenty years the main object of English left-wing intellectuals has been to break this feeling down, and if they had succeeded, we might be watching the S.S. men patrolling the London streets at this moment.”

The post-critical political culture, except to some degree and in certain areas and periods, has contrived since it emerged to preserve the unconscious or “myth” basis of the state while exercising the critical faculty in politics. The emergence of the mind did not lead to the disappearance of the heart. The patriotism of the West is not, moreover, solely a tribal solidarity; it is a feeling not only for the “nation”, but also for the order. Men who do not deny their past are wiser than men who do or who try to. As Burke points out (in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*), in the English Petition of Right:

“The parliament says to the king, ‘Your

subjects have *inherited* this freedom’, claiming their franchises not on abstract principles ‘as the rights of men’, but as the rights of Englishmen, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers.”

Nor were Selden and the other learned men who drew up the Petition ignorant of the many general theories then already current about “the rights of men.” They simply preferred to ground themselves soundly upon experience, rather than enter the vague and wild territory of speculation. Something of the sort could be said about the American Founding Fathers. Arthur Schlesinger (Sr.) remarks of them that they were “men of vision without being visionaries”; Carl Bridenbaugh that they were “men of intellect, not intellectuals.”

IN THE LONG RUN, our own political culture depends less on the conscious will of our statesmen and citizens, or even on the political institutions which have been found to provide a suitable mechanism than on the whole drift, tradition and habit, unconscious as much as conscious, unformulated as much as legislated. Or as Aristotle noted (in the *Politics*):

“There are plenty of instances of a constitution which according to its law is not democratic, but which owing to custom and way of upbringing is democratic in its workings; there are likewise others which according to law incline towards democracy, but by reason of custom and upbringing operate more like oligarchies.”

And, of course, one does not transcend one’s culture, one simply deserts it. Patriotism is, as Orwell remarked, for better or for worse. Stephen Decatur’s famous formulation (now frequently given in a later and somewhat perverted form):

“Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations, may she always be in the right; but our country right or wrong.”

does not state a general abstract principle, but only asserts that in a society of the Western democratic type involvement is inextricable. Those who go outside it are not in fact judging from a superior position. They have merely cut their roots. And the conclusions at which they arrive are not purely rational and moral: they represent, rather, the rationalisation either of active hostility to the soil that has nourished them, or, less disreputably though more sillily, of the childish hope for short cuts to perfection, the provision by magic of peace, or plenty, or justice. In any case intellectuals delude themselves

when they think that they can detach themselves from these feelings, can stand above such things and judge from the point of view of abstract principles. Orwell pointed out that they quickly became attached simply to another, and hostile, “nationalism”, by which he meant allegiance to some different principle. There have been many attacks on the Loyalty oaths required in the late 1940s and early ’50s in some American schools and universities; and, indeed, there is much to be said against them. All the same, one may feel that they are slightly preferable to the Disloyalty oaths in effect required in the late 1960s and early ’70s, when a professor charged with serving his own government—Walt Rostow, for example—could be blacklisted for the crime.

STEPHEN DECATUR’S FORMULATION, it will be noted, is totally unlike the nationalism we are accustomed to from the States in which it is associated with ideological fanaticism. With them, the mere possibility of being “wrong” does not arise: their “right” is actually *defined* in terms of their own allegiance.

And here we should note a “contradiction” in the modern Messianic Despotisms. Their movements were, in an important sense, the product of critical rather than the pre-critical attitudes. Yet they are now in the position of having to restore the pre-critical attitude as far as their own ideas and organisation are concerned. The dust must be swept back under the carpet, the djinn restored to its bottle. But this is a staggeringly difficult task, both conceptually and administratively. Conceptually it can only be done by extravagant “doublethink”, highly deleterious to the minds undergoing it; and organisationally it requires an unprecedented exercise of force, far more than was ever needed by traditionalist despotism. It seems to be partly for this reason that the new-style rule, needing every possible source of psychological support, turns to the older traditions of imperial despotism.

### The Cultural Malleability Fallacy

ORWELL REMARKS on the “mental coarseness” of revolutionaries, who “imagine that everything can be put right by altering the shape of society.”

In the despotisms, of whatever style, politics properly speaking can hardly be said to exist. There are the skills of intrigue among a narrow group of those closest to the instruments of

<sup>3</sup> *Sunday Express*, 8 August 1965.

power; but, though on a more impressive stage, these are exercised within limits which, in the civic society, would be appropriate to a parish council. There are skills of administration which may, indeed, be very highly developed. But these again, though necessary in any state, do not themselves constitute the substance of politics. Real politics is an immensely untidy art, and dependent more on the habits of a culture and the experience of centuries than on any political science, or concepts worked out in the abstract in studies or reading rooms.

The first true studies of politics, in particular that of Aristotle, were already historical. That is, they were (or the best of them were) not abstract speculations but based rather on several generations of experience in a score of real political units. It is surely no accident that both the greatest writers on politics (the other being Machiavelli) had experience of, or immediate access to, a large number of variously ruled states. It is perhaps not to be wondered at that a modern professor, separated by thousands of miles from any but the most indirect and misinterpreted notions of other types of polity, should come to shallow conclusions.

A delusion common even in the West, at least among academics, is that all “social” problems are in principle susceptible of being solved by political decision. It is this error which has led many backward countries further and further into the grip of incompetent terrorists. Each time a solution imposed by force has, after all, failed to improve matters it is thought that the fault is merely that insufficient power has been put behind it. If one more refractory social group is liquidated, if party discipline is tightened and all shirkers and compromisers adequately dealt with, then next time all will be well. We should have learned by now from these unfortunate “social experiments” that there are problems which cannot be dealt with even by the maximum application of political power.

But even genuine social improvements may be unacceptable if imposed by force. Frau Heydrich has told us<sup>3</sup> that her husband “introduced higher education and health insurance and raised the standard of living” and that the British had him killed because he was, in this way, winning over the Czechs. Not dissimilar errors are being made today.

As Burke notes in a famous passage, the great fault of every sort of arbitrary rule is the superficiality of imagining that political and similar difficulties can be disposed of by main force. This is, he points out, laziness and evasion.

“The[un]avoidable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations.

It will not suffer us to be superficial. It is the want of nerves of understanding for such a task, it is the degenerate fondness for tricking short-cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in so many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them defects in wisdom are to be supplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labours on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of slothful men. The difficulties, which they rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious and insecure."

REVOLUTIONARY STATES have in no cases succeeded in transforming their cultures so much that they can relax the pressures. The situation is particularly unlike that foreseen by Marx who held that the revolutionary state, though a dictatorship of the proletariat (a phrase by which he did not in any case imply the rule of a minority machine), would start to "wither away" immediately. In all the revolutionary countries, the current structure of society can only be maintained by the constant pressure of the administrative organs holding everything in a state of special strain. They are left regarding as the central moral principle the mere protection of their own rule. By definition this is the ideal system, no longer requiring objective justification—or only perfunctorily—as with the legitimists of the declining period of the European monarchies.

Sanguine attitudes to "Revolution" have existed mainly among comfortably situated intellectuals who resent their own societies, but suffer little from them. The modern Liberal, rejoicing in the scandals about the Establishment, may remind one of the shock given to the old régime in France by the affair of the Cardinal's Necklace. Fréteau de Saint-Just, quite typically, of course exulted:

"What a triumph for Liberal ideas! A Cardinal a thief! The Queen implicated! Mud on the crosier and the sceptre! . . ."

He was himself, equally of course, to go to the guillotine before ten years were up.

For as Camus points out, "none of the evils which totalitarianism claims to remedy is . . . worse than totalitarianism itself." He might have added that, on the record, it does not even

remedy those evils against which it particularly declaims—except, sometimes, in a purely superficial sense. That is, it may cure unemployment, as in Russia in the 1930s. But it is less unemployment as such than the hunger and misery it causes which is the objection to it; and the Russians substituted for the temporary mass unemployment of the West the far greater misery and hunger of the more enduring and more heavily populated labour camp system.

The academic, who is exempt from the temptation of supporting the old-fashioned and openly hierarchic despotisms, is deceived into thinking that he has something in common with the newer style despotism, for two reasons. First, of course, these use similar language. Words like "democracy . . . social change . . . revolutionary structure . . . basic problems . . ." abound in the mutual vocabulary.

But even academics who are not deceived, or not exactly deceived, by this superficial point, are often trapped by what on the face of it is a more substantial affinity. For, as I noted earlier both they and the revolutionary appear to be—in a sense, in fact, are—supporters of compulsory state action for what appears to be the common good. Nor is the difference between the two an absolutely clear-cut one, though, as Tocqueville remarked (about the differences between the moderate constitutional monarchies and the more left-wing republics even of his day), the revolutionary régime "promises more but gives less."

MICHAEL OAKESHOTT has noted that for some people government is "an instrument of passion: the art of politics is to inflame and direct desire. . . ." For others, which is to say in general the traditional attitude of those who have a regard for the unity and continuity of a culture, the business of government is something different: "to restrain, to deflate, to pacify, and to reconcile; not to stoke the fires of desire, but to damp them down"; on the grounds that (as he puts it) "the conjunction of dreaming and ruling generates tyranny." For it is a basic principle of true as against despotic politics that it is more important for the civic system as such to be unshaken than for particular measures to be opposed or insisted on to the limit. A democratic community enjoying political liberty is only possible when the attachment of the majority of the citizens to political liberty is stronger than their attachment to specific political doctrines. And this is to say that on many controversial issues a certain comparative apathy must prevail amongst a large part of the population. But apathy cannot appear a virtue to the man who has committed

himself to an intellectually elaborated scheme or policy.

### The Artistic Criterion Fallacy

IT IS NOT ALL THAT RARE to come across people in the West—particularly, perhaps, in academic circles—unable to believe that other cultures can be, in one sense, uncivilised, if they can be shown to produce architecture, opera, ballet, drama, etc. on an impressive scale. Even in relations between States, we find "cultural exchange" sponsored or handled by Westerners who seem to imagine that a political amenity is thereby achieved.

We must distinguish between the various uses of the word "civilisation." As is often pointed out, China has been "civilised" for millennia. That is to say, it long ago achieved a *civil* order. But it never rose to the higher degree of a *civic* order. Cultures may win our admiration for the high development of their administrative order, but political civilisation proper is another matter.

Something similar applies to the erection of great buildings. It used to be believed that the "Old Empire" of the Mayas, in the Peten area, died out owing to a migration to Northern Yucatan, where the "New Empire" then arose. It is true that the great temples and buildings ceased to be used and disappeared under the jungle. But we now realise that the peasant culture which had supported these cults continued as before: they just stopped going in for architecture—just as pyramids petered out in Egypt after the earlier dynasties. Quite highly organised communities may exist without towns. There was nothing that could be called a town in Ireland until the Danes founded Dublin and the other settlements in the 10th century.

Large buildings at least imply a fair-sized and mobilisable work-force. When it comes to the purer arts, no necessary connection between high achievement and an advanced social order exists at all. The paintings in the Altamira caves are as accomplished, as brilliant, as any that have been produced since. Yet there is a reasonable sense in which we may feel that the Stone Age hunters were all the same less "civilised" than at least some of their less brilliant successors on the same continent.

It is another delusion of the generally educated that politicians they approve of are more cultured, or more concerned with culture, than their alternates. But political culture does not run *pari passu* with "culture" in the aesthetic sense. Abraham Lincoln was incomparably more advanced in political civilisation than any Romanov or Habsburg, in spite of all the ballet

and opera of St Petersburg and Vienna. Or, if we feel that some special exception should be made for the fans not only of Artemus Ward, but even of the far worse Petroleum V. Nasby, on the grounds that Saginaw County could hardly be expected to produce the culture of the old metropolises, we can retort first, that Lincoln was extremely well read in the political culture; and we can anyhow destroy the dubious and shaky special plea by turning to England and noting that, while the Tsars were at the Bolshoi, British prime ministers (Rosebery, for example) would be at the Derby. And it was Nero, wasn't it, rather than Vespasian, who was so keen on the arts?

MUCH OF THIS attached to the intellectuals' attitude to President John F. Kennedy. They deluded themselves with the idea that he shared their high aesthetic tastes. This does not seem to be so. Perhaps they would overlook, nowadays, his addiction to James Bond. But Arthur Schlesinger (Jr), in his official biography, makes it clear that the President's favourite poem was Alan Seeger's "I Have a Rendezvous With Death", a morally admirable, but aesthetically third-rate piece of versification. One can imagine the offended cries which would have gone up if it had been revealed as General Eisenhower's favourite verse. (We are also told that Kennedy could not stand "long hair" music.)

President Kennedy's relations with the intellectuals do him credit. They do not do nearly so much credit to the intellectuals. When it came to the actual crises of foreign policy, in Cuba or Berlin or Viet Nam, he paid no attention to their demands or views. But in a general way, he wished for their support; he obtained it as he would have obtained the support of the Iowa farmers—by having them to dinner and making a few skilful gestures. (It is true, indeed, that the Iowa farmers would have been a little more hardheaded and looked for more tangible returns.) In reality, President Kennedy's intellect operated in other spheres: those proper to a politician. And even had he in fact been a keen fan of William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* and Abstract Expressionism (though one may doubt if such a taste is compatible with sense in any field, including the political), it is not that which would have marked him as a statesman.

A CURIOUS LITTLE VOLUME might be made of the poems of Stalin, Castro, Mao and Ho Chi Minh, with illustrations by A. Hitler. This last name should remind us that the much touted slogan, "When I hear the word 'culture', I reach for my revolver", was uttered by a fictional member of the S.A., the Nazi radical, egalitarian wing crushed in the blood purge of June 1934. Quite

the contrary, Hitlerism proper (like Kaiserism) swarmed over Europe to the accompaniment of vast claptrap about *Kultur* and its preservation from Anglo-Saxon and Slavonic hordes. If it comes to that, the first truly "cultured" man in English politics was the revolting Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, translator of Cicero, patron of Humanists, the purity of whose Latin brought tears to the eyes of Aeneas Sylvius himself. But he is known to political history, under different criteria, as the "Butcher Earl", owing to his record as impaler of prisoners and slaughterer of infants—new phenomena in medieval England. We have a horrid example to moderns in the incredible eulogy of him by Caxton after his death as supreme "in science and moral virtue."

It ought, at any rate, to be possible to dismiss from our minds the idea that any necessary correlation, individual or collective, exists between artistic culture and political maturity.

### The Temperamental Homogeneity Fallacy

CONDÉ'S REMARK, to the effect that academics were temperamentally unfitted to understand the world of soldiers and statesmen is enough, I hope, to make much professorial blood run cold. It is not even as if Condé himself was an intellectually muscle-bound thug of a professional soldier. Those who delighted to frequent his château when he was in disgrace make almost a roll call of the genius of the age. . . . But if intellectuals fail to understand the temperaments of the generals of their own culture and find great difficulty in mastering the principles of an alien culture, they are all the more unlikely to grasp the temperaments producing and produced by that opposite tradition.

Political opinion seems largely a matter of temperament. Strikingly enough, this is implicitly admitted by Marx himself in that passage in the *Communist Manifesto* in which, having insisted that in general people act according to their class economic interest, he makes an exception for—Marxist intellectuals!

"A portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole."

As we know, most Marxist and Communist leaders have been of bourgeois origin. Marx is here admitting that their motivations are not those normally provided for by Marxism. What are they, then? Marx himself would have been the

last to say that any of his followers were the intellectual superiors of Darwin or Clark Maxwell, nor is it likely that a Communist in this century would claim that Molotov was the intellectual superior of Ivan Pavlov or Anton Chekhov; or Louis Aragon of Louis de Broglie or Albert Camus. But if not intellect, nor interest, we are left with—temperament.

A major cause for misjudgment is the fact that the messianic totalist uses a rational-sounding political vocabulary—one not far different from that of the "liberal" academic. Not only can discussion, debate, "dialogue" take place; but the feeling is given that here, too, is a rational man with sympathetic aims.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the mistakes due to what would appear to be so simple and easily corrigible a misconception. I know of the daughter of a prominent Eastern European Communist politician who had, at one time, been arrested, tortured and barely escaped execution during the purges which affected his country. This family, as a result, became completely disenchanted with the whole system. When he was released and regained a high position, his daughter imagined that he, too, would have been chastened by his experiences. There was absolutely no sign of this. He was delighted to be back, and full of pleasure at inflicting on his countrymen, and on his former comrades where possible, any form of terror that might prove suitable. The view he seemed to take was that the rules of the game were tough, and he was not in the least surprised that when he was on the losing side, he would suffer by it. The notion that there might be something wrong with the whole system had simply not occurred to him at all; his thinking was limited to "it's my turn now."

W. H. Auden similarly writes (in *Vespers*) of the difference between an "Arcadian" and a "Utopian" temperament.

"When lights burn late in the Citadel, I (who have never seen the inside of a police station) am shocked and think: 'were the city as free as they say, after sundown all her bureaus would be huge black stones.'

He (who has been beaten up several times) is not shocked at all but thinks: 'one fine night our boys will be working up there.'"

Bernard Shaw's attitude to Revolution was markedly a bloodless rationalism which could only see in Lenin and his subordinates people conducting a reasonable experiment, and he accused Churchill as falsely characterising them as "devils" when they were no more than rational human beings at work. Orwell comments that whether one regards them as angels or devils,

one thing certain is that they were not *reasonable* men.

A remarkable dramatisation of the results of reasonable men misunderstanding unreasonable men who used the same terminology, is given of the French Revolution. La Harpe, the only eventual survivor, tells a story of a dinner held at the beginning of 1788 at which all the guests were leading intellectuals opposed to Church and State, and longing for the reorganisation of society in the "Revolution" which would bring in "the Rule of Reason." One of those present, Cazotte, an adept of the Illuminati, claimed to have the gift of prophecy. He told them that the Revolution was indeed almost on them. They jokingly asked what would happen to them under the new régime. Condorcet (Cazotte replied) would die in prison of poison he had taken to cheat the executioner.

"What has that to do with philosophy and the reign of reason?"

"It is just what I told you, it is in the name of philosophy, of humanity, and liberty. It is under the reign of reason that you will come to such an end. . . ."

Chamfort (Cazotte went on) would cut his veins with twenty-two slashes of the razor, but fail to die for some months; Vicq-d'Azyr, on the other hand, would succeed in a similar act. De Nicolai would die on the scaffold; Bailly too; and de Malesherbes, and Roucher. . . .

"Then we will be subjugated by the Turks and the Tartars?"

"Not at all. . . I have told you: those who will treat you thus will all be philosophers, and will have at every moment on their lips all the same phrases that you have been using for an hour, and will be repeating all your maxims."

By the time six years had passed, every word had been fulfilled, and Cazotte himself had been the hero and victim of one of the most pitiful events of the Revolution.

Where—perhaps in Hampstead or in Princeton—could such a meeting take place today? But then they might be discussing a foreign country rather than their own.

EACH RÉGIME PROJECTS, in a sense, a mesh of the right reticulation which—passed through society—pulls to the surface the politico-psychological type required, and leaves the others unused. It is equally the case that on the breakdown of an order, the atmosphere and events of revolution similarly drag up, with a net of different mesh, a totally different ruling type replacing, within months, the older establishment.

One of the lessons of Nazism, and indeed of the

other totalitarianisms, is that a reserve of people suited to the most abhorrent and horrible types of state are in existence in potential, and usable when the time comes. However hostile the view that might have been taken of Germany, few would have thought that quite such a criminal revolutionary element as eventually formed the ruling caste existed in its recesses. The same can be said of Hungary's Rakosi regime. Again, in *The Gulag Archipelago*, the moral-psychological type which Stalinism nourished and gave power to, comes through very clearly indeed; not the iron executors of the laws of history, but the bird-brained, sniggering torturers of the NKVD, the corrupt and selfish toadies of the apparatus. Djilas tells us that Stalin had only one moral principle: objection to income from property. As far as the state he created is concerned, even that principle was of little account compared with the great driving force of mere self-interest, habit of mind, inability to think at all outside closed formulae. But all were melded in the psychological product, or catch. One can only recognise this phenomenon, at the moral level, in the brutal local operatives of the Jacobins. And Lenin, of course, not only made use of just such characters, but, with his usual clarity, justified the action:

"Party members should not be measured by the narrow standard of petty bourgeois snobbery. Sometimes a scoundrel is useful to our party, precisely because he is a scoundrel."

A MESSIANIC REVOLUTION is not the product of messianic supermen without earthly contamination who have been sleeping in caves. It uses human material of the country it takes over. And, as I have said, political or general psychology is the product of generations.

In the Russia which the Bolsheviks seized, they could rely on few who could in any real sense be said to have been their followers before the seizure—or the promise of the seizure—of power. As with all other seizures of power it was a matter of the violent, the ambitious, the brutal, the criminal. But nor is this to say that the old underground party itself consisted simply of sea-green incorruptibles. When one thinks of Stalin, Kaganovich, Mekhlis, Yagoda, Shkiryatov, it is clear enough that the qualifications for underground membership did not exclude characters truly revolting by any standards whatever.

To look at it from a different angle and consider the concerns of the progressive intellectual—to determine if the package they form is a unity based on reason or a temperamental matter—let

me quote the left-wing historian Professor E. J. Hobsbawm, on the causes pursued by the typical progressive figure a hundred years ago: "natural philosophy, phrenology, free thought, spiritualism, temperance, unorthodox medicine, social reform, and the transformation of the family";<sup>4</sup> each supported with just as much righteousness and certainty as the partially different batch, containing a fresh lot of pseudo-sciences, now so much heard of. The point is, clearly, that what comes out of the package is not intellectual coherence, or the pursuit of interests, but a cast of mind.

The revolutionary is typical of a *milieu* with little or no civic culture and thus cut off from all political realities. In a rather different sense, one can see that this also applies to a certain type of Westerner. He is typically a student, or an academic who has never in effect ceased to be a student. His experience has not included the give-and-take of ordinary political and civic life. He has come to utopian or near-utopian attitudes at an age when whatever he may have absorbed from the social ambience is at its weakest—and his tendency to reject it at its greatest—and at a time when his own experience is virtually nil. He also, typically at least, comes from families whose way of life has provided

effective cushioning against the rough edges of reality.

As has been shown by analysts of the revolutionary movements of the Middle Ages, the leaders were mainly members of the lower clergy, with a few eccentric scions of the lower nobility, together with obscure laymen who had somehow acquired a clerical education. As Norman Cohn puts it, "a recognisable social stratum—a frustrated and rather low-grade intelligentsia. . . ."<sup>5</sup> (And for their cannon fodder they did not recruit the poor as such, but those of the poor "who could find no assured and recognised place in society at all.") And Cohn, noting all these resemblances to the modern revolutionaries like Nazis and Communists, adds that even in the medieval context, not remarkable for tolerance or objectivity, the millenarians were "abnormal in their destructiveness and irrationality"—psychological points.

A discussion of "temperament" (a word selected for its appropriate lack of precision) as a major crux in politics is hardly popular in political-science circles, partly because it is extremely hard to produce an adequate typology of political temperament, at any rate one better than Plutarch's. Still, one advantage of such an approach is that it enables us to take note of a particular temperament—that of the "intellectual", which is particularly limited and unreal, particularly unable to credit the existence of various temperaments and various cultures, and so particularly likely to lead us into disaster, if heeded

<sup>4</sup> In the *New Statesman* (4 April 1970).

<sup>5</sup> Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (2nd and later editions).

### Recluse

Smoking the hours. Fag-ends litter  
the tabletop, ash on my shirt  
and trousers, on the few books  
I still possess, and never read.  
It is their smell I've come to love:  
the yellowed page I lift to my face  
and breathe. Poems, stories, all

long forgotten; but brackish print,  
the smoke-scent of a first edition . . .  
I close my eyes, and live.  
I do not know or care what time it is.  
Days fly though me  
like grey sea birds through mist  
on their way to the sea.

Tony Flynn

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