

Strategy: A New Era?

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I. THE MERGING POST-NUCLEAR ERA

At a time when the transformations in the Soviet Union have abruptly changed the climate of Soviet-Western relations, and when the less easily reversible decline of Marxism-Leninism has virtually ended its ideological challenge to democratic capitalism, it is natural to expect equally great changes in the realm of strategy. Optimists can now have their proclivity more easily allowed, for Soviet-Western negotiations over all manner of questions have better prospects than ever before, while a Soviet-Western war now seems so improbable that its very possibility does not detain us.

All is unthreatening if not exactly quiet on the eastern front, but if we had with us the patron saint of strategy, Herakleitos of Ephesus, he might remind us that the equilibrium of all things existent results from the clash of opposing forces, so some new antagonisms must necessarily arise to replace antagonisms in decay so as to sustain the equilibrium of what is and of what will be. Having indirectly borrowed from Herakleitos before, to formulate a universal logic of conflict,¹ I can borrow from him again if only in jest, or at least for purposes heuristic rather than earnestly predictive, in order to obtain a Law of the Conservation of Conflict from the Herakleitan precept. If conflict cannot diminish but only its vectors change, what new vectors will assure its future constancy?

Will the Soviet-Western antagonism be replaced by North-South confrontations? Demographic pressures, cultural collisions, and economic resentments certainly irritate relations between Latin

¹The "paradoxical" logic presented in my *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987). The central idea—the transformation of all conflictual action into its opposite by way of a culminating point—I derived from Carl von Clausewitz, who in turn was inspired by Hegelian ideas themselves replicative of the *coincidentia oppositorum* of Nicholas Cusanus, who in turn reflects the fragmentary Herakleitos (unless it is a case of reinvention).

America and the United States, North Africa and Western Europe, and the Russians and Central Asians, but one may doubt if a clash of opposing forces can arise between a materially dominant North and a fragmented South. Will a far better alternative emerge from the conjoint discovery of a common enemy of all humanity in the ecological destructions and disruptions of our days? Herakleitos of Ephesus would be well satisfied by a world of nations forced into harmony by their cooperative struggle to preserve the equilibrium of nature. Or will equilibrium be sustained by the worse alternative of an “internalization” of conflict, with old and new animosities fracturing the grand coalition of Americans, East Asians, and Europeans that arose in response to the growth of Soviet power, even as ethnic strife is already manifest in the Soviet Union?

And finally there is the simplest of solutions, a revival of Soviet-Western antagonism, perhaps caused by a stereotypical regression to tyranny of disenchanting reformers or even perhaps by a most unexpected resurgence of Russian if not Soviet military power in technologically revolutionary forms.

To these questions I propose to revert in my second lecture, when it is my assigned task to contemplate the future of war. In the meantime, I would like to address a most important change in the realm of strategy that we need not await, for it has been under way for decades: I refer to the decline of nuclear weapons — the decline of their military and diplomatic importance, not of their numbers, which indeed have much increased over the past decades, much in the same way as more and more bank notes must be handed over to purchase steadily less when a currency depreciates.

The Rise and Decline of Nuclear Weapons

To assess the importance of nuclear weapons in international politics at various points in time, it would be necessary to engage in dubious comparisons between different crises in which nuclear weapons had some presumed role — crises each different in their salient characteristics, each still inadequately documented on the

Soviet side at least, and each the subject of unresolved scholarly controversies. Perhaps it suffices to recall the prominence of nuclear threats — in the Korean armistice negotiations and in the crises of 1956 over Suez, in 1960 and 1961 over Berlin, and in 1962 over Cuba — and then take note of the absence of such threats since then, with the uncertain exception of the 1973 Egyptian crisis and no exceptions thereafter.

But that comparison may easily be deemed unpersuasive, given the great importance accorded to negotiations over nuclear arms, especially after 1969, and in view of the role of new nuclear-weapon acquisitions as remedies to insecurity, as modern substitutes for the depth-augmenting territorial seizures that were once the standard remedy of insecure Great Powers. That, by the way, is a benign interpretation of the arms race that perhaps deserves some analytical attention.

Another approach would examine the text of official speeches and documents deemed authoritative, in order to compare the role therein assigned to nuclear weapons at various points in time. That is a procedure that has its merits, but the more one knows of the genesis and aftermath of each speech and document, the more uneasily can they be qualified as authoritative or representative. Speeches and documents, moreover, describe, at most, decisions made or intended, not actions — a distinction especially significant in the realm of statecraft, to which I will return in what follows.

Fortunately there is much less ambiguous evidence on the relative importance of nuclear weapons over time, and that is their diminished and diminishing role in the composition of the armed forces of the nuclear powers.

How matters now stand is simply stated: the United States, the Soviet Union, and the lesser nuclear powers all maintain large forces on land, at sea, and for the air that are primarily equipped with nonnuclear weapons, primarily trained in nonnuclear warfare, and primarily supplied with nonnuclear ordnance, for sustained nonnuclear war. Those primarily nonnuclear forces do still

include a large if diminishing number of nuclear artillery shells, short-range missile warheads, torpedoes and depth charges, sea-launched missiles, bombs and air-to-ground missiles for fighter bombers, and other types of so-called “tactical” nuclear ordnance. But those forces are now structured and sized for nonnuclear war; in their operational plans, the role of tactical nuclear weapons is more and more residual; their training in the use of tactical nuclear weapons is more and more atrophied; and in every aspect of their inward, institutional existence, tactical nuclear weapons are increasingly marginal.

To be sure, nuclear weapons still dominate their own category of so-called “strategic” forces, composed of medium- and long-range bombers, ballistic missiles based on land or aboard submarines, and cruise missiles both air launched and sea launched. All such strategic forces, however, account for one-fifth or less of the military expenditures of the nuclear powers, and for an even smaller proportion of military personnel.

Compare now the situation that prevailed thirty years ago. Originally introduced after 1945 as highly efficient weapons for aerial bombardment — a very powerful military instrument but still only one instrument among several— by the later 1950s nuclear weapons of all kinds were increasingly defining the composition of U.S. armed forces as a whole and indeed seemed to be on the verge of absorbing the totality of U.S. military power. A similar nuclearization of the Soviet armed forces was proceeding not far behind, and in Britain the armed forces were beginning to implement the 1957 Defence White Paper, which called for a primary reliance on nuclear weapons for their primary missions. All the nuclear powers thus accepted the virtual equation of nuclear strength with military strength in toto, except in the case of minor affrays in remote areas, “brushfire wars” in the jargon of the times.

At that culminating point in the importance of nuclear weapons, the Tactical Air Command of the U.S. Air Force was abandoning an entire tradition centered on the aerial combat of fighters

to become a nuclear attack force. Instead of the more agile machines till then favored, it was acquiring heavy, unmaneuverable but long-range aircraft with internal bomb bays, miniature “strategic” bombers in effect, while its pilots were being weaned away from their passion for the dogfight and their skill in dive bombing to be trained for nuclear bombardment almost exclusively — there was even a suggestion to adopt the name Tactical Nuclear Air Command. As for the Air Defense Command, it was acquiring only heavy interceptors meant to engage Soviet bombers with nuclear-armed rockets and missiles. In sum, the United States was losing the ability to use air power except for nuclear war. Today, by contrast, most tactical aircraft are once again air-combat and ground-attack fighters, and their pilots are primarily trained for nonnuclear operations. Even the Strategic Air Command, on the other side of the ledger, is now capable of substantial nonnuclear operations; a generation ago, by contrast, it was so narrowly specialized for nuclear bombardment that both aircraft and training had to be dramatically modified for the subsequent nonnuclear operations over Indochina.

The U.S. Navy would not allow itself to be left behind by the process of nuclearization. Its aircraft-carrier task forces, so recently triumphant over the Imperial Japanese Navy in the Pacific, no longer had a worthy antagonist to fight at sea, and the number of underemployed warships was embarrassingly large. But the U.S. Navy found its salvation in the conversion of aircraft carriers for the launching of nuclear air strikes against targets on land, acquiring heavy jet aircraft for the purpose, along with new “super-carriers” that could accommodate them. The navy had so little doubt as to its new mission that the attack aircraft it developed during the later 1950s were specifically designed for nuclear bombardment: the large, long-range types had the internal bomb bays then thought necessary for nuclear weapons, while the small Skyhawk initially lacked self-sealing fuel tanks, deemed unnecessary for the envisaged one and only nuclear attack.

The U.S. Navy was also acting with exceptional urgency to acquire a novel force exclusively for nuclear attack: submarines armed with long-range ballistic missiles. And because of the uncertainties of that enormously ambitious project, the navy also continued to develop long-range cruise missiles, unmanned jet aircraft designed to be launched from submarine decks. The ballistic-missile submarines remain wholly nuclear even today, but in the later 1950s the navy was nuclearizing across the board, by providing its cruisers, destroyers, frigates, and attack submarines (on the “tactical” side of the ledger) with nuclear-armed anti-aircraft missiles, nuclear depth charges, and nuclear torpedoes, while slighting the provision of nonnuclear armaments to the point of compromising the ability of naval forces to wage nonnuclear war on any serious scale. Even the Marine Corps was energetically attempting to become as nuclear as possible, though its evidently important role in so-called “brushfire wars” allowed it to remain the least nuclearized of the armed forces.

At present, by contrast, we find the role of nuclear weapons greatly reduced in the U.S. Navy. They are retained aboard a small and diminishing number of warships for a diminishing range of tactical purposes, and their role in training and operational plans has become marginal.

The nuclearization of the U.S. Army during the later 1950s was even more significant, for its declining ability to conduct non-nuclear operations was directly increasing the potential automaticity of nuclear use in the event of any serious war. It was with much fanfare that in 1953 the army acquired both its first nuclear-capable tube artillery (the 280mm “atomic cannon”) and its first nuclear ballistic missile (the Corporal), and by 1957 its operational scheme for large-scale operations was very largely based on the use of nuclear weapons.

The armor-spearheaded breakthrough and outflanking maneuvers of the Second World War were judged entirely obsolete, and even the very recent experiences of Korea were deemed irrelevant

and best forgotten. Except for minor affrays, the army's combat operations would instead consist of the conveyance, protection, and firing of a whole variety of nuclear weapons. Indirect fire would be provided out to the unprecedented range of 240 miles by Redstone missiles (nevertheless part of the "field" artillery), and by tube artillery of medium calibers firing nuclear shells. For direct fire, on the other hand, the army planned to equip every echelon with its own nuclear weapons: the 22-mile Honest John at the corps level, the lighter 10-mile Little John rocket at the divisional level, and the portable 1.25-mile Davy Crockett recoilless weapon at the battalion level, to give lieutenant-colonels their own nuclear weapons. Beyond that, a "flying jeep" was planned to carry the Davy Crockett, thereby reduced to a squad weapon in effect — a weapon that might be fired under the command of a sergeant, a corporal, or perhaps a private first class.

Whether the army could fight purposefully with nuclear weapons was much contested, but it would certainly be unable to fight seriously without them once its conversion was completed, for the envisaged new army would lack the mass of armor and artillery needed for any large conventional war — a futile effort in any case, according to many. That was the view expressed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, still the country's premier soldier, on May 11, 1959: "What good would it do to send a few more thousands or indeed even a few divisions of troops to Europe? . . . with 175 Soviet divisions in that neighbourhood — why in the world would we dream of fighting a (nonnuclear) ground war?"² Given the terms of that particular comparison, it is all the more telling that the Soviet Union was also rapidly nuclearizing its armed forces. The rise of nuclear weapons to their culminating point of importance was not an isolated U.S. phenomenon, the result of U.S. policies alone. Nor was the emulation of those policies compulsory for the Soviet Union. Regardless of the nucleariza-

²Press conference, in *Public Papers of the Presidents: Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1959* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 245.

tion of the U.S. armed forces, the 175 Soviet divisions cited by Eisenhower could still shift the onus of starting nuclear destruction if nothing else, thus forcing the hardest of decisions upon the leadership of the United States, and burdening it with the greatest of responsibilities in the aftermath, if that mattered. That the concurrent Soviet decision was not merely reactive or merely imitative is revealed by the specific nature of Soviet nuclearization.

Without offering another detailed catalog, it may suffice to recall that the 1957–59 reductions in the Soviet Union’s ground forces deprived them of some 1.5 million men and that a great part of them came from the artillery, wherein thousands of guns, howitzers, mortars, and rocket launchers were replaced by a few hundred nuclear-armed rockets and missiles.³ During the Second World War, the Soviet army had learned to rely on huge volumes of concentrated artillery fire in both offensive and defensive battles; that was its more reliable substitute for the skillful maneuvers of the Germans and for the powerful tactical air power of the Anglo-American forces. Hence the disbandment of the Soviet army’s characteristic all-artillery formations and the drastic reduction in the artillery of its line forces after 1957 had a very precise meaning: from then on, the Soviet army would rely on “battle-field” nuclear weapons in any serious operations.

To be sure, as in the United States, there was an inevitable tension between classic conceptions of war and the seemingly inevitable progress of nuclearization. That is exemplified in a 1961 speech by Marshal Rodion Y. Malinovsky of wartime fame, then minister of defense but still very much a good army man: “massive, multimillion armed forces” would still be needed in a future

³After a reduction in 1957 of 1.2 million men, a further reduction of 0.3 million followed in 1958–59; a planned third reduction from 3.6 million to 2.4 million was seemingly interrupted by the 1961 Berlin crisis (Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Power and Europe, 1945–1970* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970], pp. 164–65). For a recent confirmation of these events, see FBIS Daily Report-Soviet Union, FBIS-SOV-88-036, Feb. 24, 1988, p. 71; interview with Soviet General of the Army I. M. Tretyak.

world war, he said, even as he declared that such a war “will lead to the death of hundreds of millions of people, and whole countries will be turned into lifeless deserts covered with ashes.”⁴ Contemporary Soviet doctrine called for the rapid exploitation of nuclear strikes by armored forces, whose fully enclosed vehicles were to provide a modicum of radiation shielding, unlike the U.S. army’s envisaged flying jeeps; but it was not explained what any forces of whatever kind might achieve by maneuvering in “lifeless deserts covered with ashes.”

Today by contrast, the Soviet army is once again a largely non-nuclear force, trained, equipped, and supplied primarily for non-nuclear operations, whose leaders have evidenced no opposition to an even more complete denuclearization, for reasons obvious enough given the present magnitude of those nonnuclear forces on the eve of their promised reduction.

Finally, the Soviet navy then and now may be compared on one foot, as the sages were wont to say: nuclear-armed missiles both of the antiship and the land-attack type, as well as nuclear torpedoes, were becoming its core and essence thirty years ago but now remain as last resorts among a great mass of nonnuclear weapons for warships and submarines primarily designed for non-nuclear warfare.

If we look beyond the two greatest powers, we can obtain an oblique indication of how the importance of nuclear weapons was assayed thirty years ago, from the common expectations of their imminent spread. The “proliferation” metaphor itself suggests a geometric increase: nuclear-country X endows countries X1, X2, and X3 with the skills and equipment required to make nuclear weapons, and then each of them assists other countries in turn, so that one nuclear power would finally bring forth a great many. Though that implication may not have been meant, the estimates

⁴ Speech before the Twenty-second Party Congress, October 1961, cited in Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), p.43.

of the late 1950s anticipated ten, twenty, thirty, or even fifty nuclear powers by successive dates within this century; much uncertainty was admitted as to exact numbers and exact dates, but the estimators were certain that there would be many nuclear powers in not many years.⁵

The one possibility ruled out was that thirty years might pass with not more than a handful of countries added to the three that already possessed nuclear weapons by the end of the 1950s. The widely accepted forecasts of a rapid spread of nuclear weapons reflected the belief that they were very useful, not only very efficient in destroying on a vast scale at low cost, but also broadly applicable in both statecraft and war. It was therefore assumed that no country which could acquire them would willingly renounce the opportunity — and by the late 1950s it was known that the required skills and resources could be mustered by many countries, and not only by the very greatest powers. That was the seemingly compelling logic of proliferation estimates at the culminating point in the relative importance of nuclear weapons within the totality of the instruments of military power.

The decline of nuclear weapons since then, affirmed by the resurgence of nonnuclear forces, has now progressed to the point where their numbers are being reduced also, in a process that has been under way for some years. I am not referring to arms-control measures negotiated between the Soviet Union and the United States. Except for the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, which encompassed only a narrow category of weapons, arms-control agreements till now have only placed limits on the further increase in the number of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons. It now seems probable that large numerical reductions in the broad category of intercontinental-range nuclear forces might soon be negotiated in

⁵For a classic presentation of that view, see Leonard Beaton and John Maddox, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons* (1962; repr., Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976). By 1966 even the alarmist view had to accommodate a modicum of doubt, as in Alastair Buchan, ed., *A World of Nuclear Powers?* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966).

the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, though delays, perhaps prolonged, or even a failure to agree or to ratify, remain possible.

The process that has actually been under way is rather the unilateral withdrawal of nuclear weapons previously incorporated within ground, naval, and air forces on the “nonstrategic” side of the ledger. The impulse for these reductions comes from within those armed forces themselves; it owes nothing to expectations of reciprocity and little or nothing to calculations of propaganda benefits, which indeed have not been seriously sought. As against the loud *captatio benevolentia* of political leaders protesting their earnest desire for the reduction or even the elimination of nuclear weapons, the opposition of military professionals to the continued upkeep of nuclear weapons deemed less and less usable has been far more consequential.

The submariners of the U.S. Navy, for example, have long disliked the presence of nuclear-armed Subroc depth-charge missiles aboard their vessels. They do not suffer from a nuclear allergy and are indeed much attached to their nuclear reactors; but even the largest submarines have room for only two or three dozen weapons for their torpedo tubes, and each Subroc loaded on board precludes one torpedo, while its nuclear depth charge subjects it to appropriately severe restrictions not imposed on nonnuclear torpedoes. At present, a nonnuclear substitute for Subroc is being developed, just as nonnuclear substitutes were developed long ago for other specifically nuclear weapons, both naval and not, which also occupied scarce slots in magazines and aircraft racks.

By far the largest unilateral reductions, however, have occurred in the number of nuclear artillery shells. They do not directly displace nonnuclear counterparts, because nuclear shells are destined for the tubes of the ordinary field artillery. But the specialized storage, handling, protection, and training that nuclear shells require have been viewed as increasingly onerous in light of their diminishing role in the most plausible tactical schemes and operational plans.

I do not wish to present such institutional preferences in celebratory tones: neither bureaucratic proclivities nor managerial efficiency is necessarily congruent with strategical desiderata. Indeed a persuasive argument holds that it is precisely the awkward, sinister, and inefficient intermingling of nuclear and nonnuclear weapons in the ordinary line forces that can best deter war, because of the potential automaticity of the employment of the particular nuclear weapons that would first be engulfed by the fighting.

In any case, for good or ill, similar calculations appear to have reduced the number of specifically nuclear weapons in the Soviet armed forces also, albeit at a much slower rate — which may simply reflect the Soviet tendency to retain in service equipment large and small that has long passed its prime.

Numerical reductions, both reciprocal and unilateral, are now another symptom of the decline in the relative importance of nuclear weapons within the totality of the instruments of military power. But that reflects the current state of the respective nuclear arsenals and also the present climate of international politics: the condition would persist even if the symptom were reversed — as it was during the “nuclear inflation” of the 1960s and 1970s, when the number of weapons and later of warheads was multiplied even as the significance of all nuclear weapons was diminished by the rehabilitation of nonnuclear military strength.

Toward Postnuclear Conditions

Looking back on how things were, and seeing how they now are, a linear projection would bring the United States and the Soviet Union to the state that I have elsewhere defined as “post-nuclear.” Both would retain nuclear weapons in postnuclear conditions, if only because even without proliferation *Strictu Sensu* other countries already have them, more countries may acquire them, and the two greatest powers themselves could too easily acquire them anew, or perhaps overlook a few in the course of supposedly terminal reductions.

In postnuclear conditions, however, no other purposes but the reciprocal dissuasion of nuclear attack could any longer be accomplished by nuclear weapons; in the jargon of the trade, “extended deterrence” would be renounced, and specifically the dissuasion of nonnuclear attack upon the territory of allies. Changed intentions would presumably be affirmed by the number and specific technical characteristics of the remaining nuclear weapons and of defensive arrays, if any.

Given the continued reliance of the allies of the United States on deterrence twice extended, to protect others and to protect them with nuclear weapons against nonnuclear attack, it is obvious that the postnuclear state could not be reached without colliding with the central security predicaments of our days, not all of which would be alleviated even by a Soviet Union transformed into an open, democratic, and impeccably unaggressive society, or by a Soviet Union much diminished by manifold nationalist defections yet still peaceful in its Russian core. I am of course referring to intra-Western and for that matter intra-Eastern security concerns now suppressed by the Soviet-Western tension that remains.

To these considerations I intend to revert in the second of these lectures, but in the meantime I would note that to delimit what attitudes to war — nonnuclear of course — might emerge, or re-emerge, in a transformed future would require gifts of prophecy rather than those of analysis, unless one believes that the very nature of political structures can condition mentalities, regardless of other circumstances.

A more detailed definition of postnuclear conditions would require answers to other and far more specific unresolved questions. One cannot say, for example, that *all* extended deterrence would be renounced, because the definition of what is and what is not territory still protected by nuclear dissuasion cannot be obtained by a glance at the political map. Any territory can be assimilated to national territory at any time by political affirmation; John F. Kennedy, proclaiming himself a “Berliner” (he did not

mean the sausage roll), remains the classic example. And then there is the problem of military forces overseas or at sea — are they protected against nonnuclear attack by the residual nuclear dissuasion of the postnuclear state?

A different category of problems would arise even in a much simplified world, containing only the United States and the Soviet Union. So long as their nuclear forces remain in being in more or less their present manned bomber and missile configurations, they cannot but have the potential to attack one another, and symmetrical numerical reductions might actually increase that potential.

Granted, the “counterforce” potential of long-range nuclear forces can be higher or lower, depending on the detailed characteristics of precision, energy yield, and coordinated controllability, and all those attributes could be regulated by tacit or negotiated agreements. But unless radically new weapon configurations are introduced — itself a change that might easily require more than a decade — the implementation of qualitative restraints on counterforce potentials could add sides to the polygon ad infinitum, without ever reaching the perfect circle of nuclear forces that can deter nuclear attack yet cannot themselves attack nuclear forces, if only to limit the damage that they might inflict; for that purpose, a fully disarming capacity would not of course be required.

As for Britain and France, as well as China and prospective other nuclear powers also, it may be taken for granted that inherent dissuasive effects would extend to nonnuclear attacks also if they do affect national territory. Even that proposition, however, cannot be categorical. At the very least, raids and other minor violations need not be deterred at all; and even outright territorial seizures might not be deterred, if the territory in question is perceived as distinctly marginal because it is geographically isolated, thinly populated, and otherwise insignificant. The potential for miscalculation is obvious: outsiders might entirely miss the felt significance of some given territory or the significance it might

abruptly acquire within the altered political dynamics created precisely by the circumstances of an attack.

Explanations: Causality versus Mentality

As we recall the rise of nuclear weapons to their culminating point of importance and their decline thereafter, one might be tempted to say that it was reason, *ratio*, *Verstand*, that impelled the nuclearization of the armed forces from the late 1950s, because it seemed illogical to retain less powerful armaments when nuclear weapons could be had instead; and that later on it was a broader dialectical comprehension, *intellectus*, *Vernunft*, that revealed the coincidence of opposites that makes nuclear weapons ineffectual, precisely because they are far too efficient. Without necessarily being immersed in the doctrine of Nicholas Cusanus, many a private soldier in Vietnam or Afghanistan must have uncovered that particular *coincidentia oppositorum* when finding himself fighting rifles with rifles, even as the nuclear weapons of his own country remained impotent because they were much too powerful.

Recorded fact, however, does not allow us that conceit: General Leslie Groves, US. Corps of Engineers, organizer of the Manhattan Project, deplored the inhibiting excess of the destructive power of nuclear weapons when first briefed by scientists at the very outset of the project, long before the original fission device was assembled, and a decade before excess was further magnified by the advent of thermonuclear weapons. More conclusively, official assessments and planning documents of the first postwar year reveal that U.S. officials at least were fully cognizant of the shortcomings of all-out nuclearization.⁶

How, therefore, can one explain the extreme nuclearization of the late 1950s and the intention to nuclearize even more? How could sober minds contemplate Davy Crockett flying jeeps, or armored maneuvers through “lifeless deserts,” with sufficient equa-

⁶Most notably NSC-68, the well-known National Security Council document, which was delivered to President Truman on April 7, 1950.

nimity to have such things inscribed in field manuals and propagated to the public at large?

At the time, many in the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, and no doubt elsewhere, evidently saw no need to explain an apparent technical inevitability. That thermonuclear and fission weapons could be acquired in large numbers with increasingly effective means for their conveyance was a sufficient reason for the wholesale nuclearization of the armed forces for many contemporary observers. In that view, the decisions that were accomplishing the transformation merely recognized technical inevitability, after the fact. But nowadays nuclear weapons are even more abundant, and their conveyance is far more efficient, and yet nuclear forces account for a very much smaller share of the totality of American and Soviet military forces than they did at the end of the 1950s, as we have seen. Dismissing technical inevitability therefore, we may be tempted by a variety of other explanations for the rise of nuclear weapons to their culminating moment of supreme importance and the subsequent decline.

One explanation that may seem persuasive depicts the rehabilitation of nonnuclear forces as the outcome of a series of circumventing maneuvers, whereby nonnuclear strength, maintained to carry out tasks deemed too unimportant to warrant nuclear use, in turn presented nonnuclear threats to the other side, which evoked an outmatching nonnuclear response, which in turn became a threat, and so on; hence the culminating point of maximal nuclearization is simply the state antecedent which prevailed before those reciprocal circumventions. This explanation, however, is of course refuted by the existence of an even earlier state, prior to nuclearization — which was accomplished precisely by the voluntary renunciation of potentially circumventing nonnuclear forces.

Or else, recalling the shocking discovery of the Korean War — namely that nonnuclear war with the Communist alliance could absorb a very intense effort even on a very narrow sector of what had come to be seen as a worldwide perimeter — we may explain

nuclearization as a delayed reaction — delayed because of course the original reaction to the outbreak of the Korean War was the great rearmament under way by 1951, which was predominantly nonnuclear in content. And then, presumably, one could explain the subsequent denuclearization as resulting from a reappraisal of the Korean experience, which was not, after all, the narrow-sector opening shot of a larger war. There may be something in this explanation: while denuclearization was promoted in the Kennedy years, when there was actually a heightened expectation of narrow-sector challenges, it was anticipated that the latter would be indirect and ambiguous, below the “threshold” of possible nuclear use.

One might even be tempted by an economic explanation. Recalling the inelegant slogan of the day, we could say that it was a desire for a “bigger bang for the buck” that induced the frugal Eisenhower administration to promote the nuclearization of the armed forces, setting in train all that followed. It is true of course that for many purposes nuclear forces can be much more economical than equivalent nonnuclear forces, and it is also true that the difference was calculated at the time. But even when fiscal prudence was far more seriously professed than now, economic calculations could hardly justify the extreme denuclearization then pursued, which would have compelled the virtually immediate use of nuclear weapons in any serious war. The survival of civilization was not deliberately risked to reduce marginal rates in the income tax.

Actually I believe that it is futile to define and rank specific causes for the nuclearization that began in the later 1950s. Decisions known to have been made can often be imputed more or less plausibly to causes definable by retrospective analysis; but especially in military matters, the relationship between known decisions and subsequent actions is usually loose, often divergent, and sometimes contradictory.

First, decisions are abstractions, but actions unfold in the contemporary reality, thereby being inevitably affected by unantic-

pated circumstances, transient intrusions, accidents, errors, and all such frictional factors. Second, and more significantly, the relationship between what is decided at higher levels (where causality is usually imputed) and what the implementing research, industrial, and military institutions actually do, is normally not more than tangential, because each institution has its own inner imperatives and its own preferred *modus operandi*, which, absent a purely accidental coincidence of goals and modes, lead to the deflection, delay, and distortion of higher-level decisions; such inward proclivities cannot be totally suppressed even in the most formidable dictatorships (the German railway administration seriously impeded the deportations of European Jews, because its officials invariably demanded payment for the carriage of each involuntary passenger; they did offer reduced “excursion” group rates to the SS, but firmly refused credit). Third, actions can proceed from decisions made but unrecorded; and conversely, decisions recorded and plausibly explained by imputed causes may not be implemented or even transmitted for execution.

To summarize, the known result — nuclearization — was a complex, evolving process composed of successive actions (some contradictory), preceded by successive decisions (some unrecorded, others recorded but not applied) which were subsequently implemented by institutions in a manner often tangential or sometimes directly opposed to the intent of the original decisions. The unidimensional abstraction of causes can at most explain the unidimensional abstraction of known political, military, or technical decisions; it cannot reliably explain the actions subsequently recorded.

In the realm of strategy especially, the addiction of the social sciences to causality — single, multiple, or weighted — is therefore best resisted. That does not, however, leave us bereft of understanding, for we can seek a less deterministic enlightenment by reconstructing the perceived context of the times — the atmosphere in which decisions were made, declarations were enunciated, and actions took place.

Historians will one day give us more or less plausible accounts of the present-times of the 1950s, both the past-presents of memory, and the future-presents of expectations. There is surely no doubt, however, as to the characterizing features of those times: the ideological struggle between democratic capitalism and the contemporary Soviet version of Marxist collectivism, and the bipolar attraction-repulsion that emanated from Moscow and Washington.

The ideological struggle was so intense in the Italy of the 1950s that it even penetrated my middle school in Milan and was sometimes the cause of playground affrays. Of course we knew nothing of the texts of the rival ideologies, which we simply labeled “democracy” and “communism.” But children who had to wear sandals even in January, when others in their own classroom were driven to the Alpine ski slopes every weekend, knew the meaning of capitalist inequality. And even our vague knowledge of Communist oppressions further to the east sufficed to explain why some parents were so fearful of a Communist electoral victory in Italy itself. We had not heard of the Gulag, but “Siberia” was an epithet more than a geographic expression, and it might evoke a clumsier “Guerra Battereologica” in response at the time of the Korean War, when the Communist party mounted a huge campaign to accuse the United States of waging germ warfare.

Of course we took it for granted that the worldwide struggle between the leaders of each ideological camp was also our struggle, just as it seemed natural to us that Italy’s two largest political parties should be the loyal follower of one or the other. It was rather the position of the small parties in between that we found confusing and actually irritating, for exactly the same reason that both John Foster Dulles and Stalin were irritated by India’s non-alignment, as I later learned: in a confrontation between freedom and oppression, or progress and reaction as some had it, neutrality was despicable.

Thus some among us assumed the burden of offering excuses for the recurring incidents of racial discrimination in the Ameri-

can South, while others had to explain away the newsreels of Berlin workers battling Soviet tanks in 1953, which we then saw on our weekly pilgrimage to the cinema.

No doubt we had less difficulty than our predecessors with the medieval period in our Italian history lessons: that cities all over Italy should be divided within and without by the rivalry between the pope's Guelfs and the emperor's Ghibellines made perfect sense to us. After all, we all knew that Bologna was Communist and with Stalin, while Milan was anti-Communist and with the Americans, though Stalin had many followers in Milan too, just as there had once been a Ghibelline faction in that Guelf city.

The Korean War remained in the remote background in those pretelevision days, and though we knew that our champions were in combat, we were left hopelessly confused between the Italian renditions of "states united" (i.e., the United States of America) and "nations united" (i.e., the United Nations). The siege of Dien Bien Phu was a much starker act of war, but because American troops were absent from the scene, we were not entirely certain how far that struggle was our struggle too.

And so it was that for us at the middle school of Via Rembrandt the most dramatic of all East-West confrontations was the great poster war. Across the street from the school, there was a wall habitually covered with the posters of the different political parties, a collage of hammer-and-sickles, crosses, shields, and rising suns that never detained our attention as far as I can recall. One morning, however, we found the entire wall plastered with multi-colored posters beautifully printed on thick, creamy paper, which contained no party symbol but which featured punchy anti-Communist slogans under the heading *Pace e Libertá*.

The day after, there was again much talk of the posters, which our leading Red, the son of a Communist party official, knowingly described as American propaganda. I remember wondering whether Americans would have traveled all the way to our own Via Rembrandt just to put up those posters; and it happens, a few

years ago I actually met the gentleman who had organized the countrywide *Pace e Libertá* campaign, a distinguished wartime resistance leader turned anti-Communist campaigner, who told me that he had indeed received Central Intelligence Agency funds at one point.

That afternoon, as we left school, some boys started tearing down the new posters. Others loudly objected, and the shouting soon gave way to shoving and then to fisticuffs. By the time our teachers came out to order everyone home, there were a few bloody noses and some torn clothing. After that, for the rest of the school year, each new lot of posters from whatever source was soon torn down by one side or the other.

That was true bipolarity in action, the active alignment of potentially autonomous forces worldwide with either Moscow or Washington. As was true of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, these alignments could be rigidly predetermined by the very nature of the governing power, as in the case of the People's Republics of Eastern Europe, or Milan's Guelf affiliation during the Sforza ascendancy. But elsewhere, external alignments were shaped by changeable internal political equilibria — and therefore external forces were tempted to intrude in order to secure or reverse the prevailing internal equilibrium. To some extent, that was true of Italy, where a Communist party that attracted one vote in three could not gain more votes in part because Italy's membership in the Western camp effectively sustained interests that opposed the Communist party. Elsewhere, such intrusions were far more intense, and that first postwar decade was the heyday of subversion and countersubversion. Again, as with the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, bipolarity operated differently at different levels.

In the realm of ideological debate, what might have been a many-sided and nuanced politicoeconomic discourse between exponents of systems more or less planned, more or less state owned, more or less individualistic, communitarian, or even corporative, was brutally simplified into a Communist/anti-Communist con-

frontation, hardly more expressive of varied political and economic concerns than the slogans we schoolboys would shout at one another.

Internally, bipolarity invested domestic contentions with an international significance that greatly amplified their scope and severely degraded their expression: strikes promiscuously intended to damage local manifestations of the worldwide capitalist system on Moscow's behalf, as well as to extract better terms of employment, could usefully be complemented by industrial sabotage. Likewise, Communist-sponsored mass demonstrations that were often deliberately violent, were easily seen by anti-Communist authorities as internal counterparts to the Soviet military threat from without; as such, they evoked quasi-military responses, whether from CRS anti-riot police in France or the charging jeeps of the *Celere* "fast police" in Italy. Even in Britain, where sabotage was rare and street fighting unknown, shop stewards and even major union leaders sometimes declared more or less openly that the wider purpose of their militancy was to contribute to the worldwide struggle against capitalism.

In Greece, as in many places outside Europe starting with the Philippines and Malaya and continuing even now in Angola, for example, matters went far beyond strikes and demonstrations to reach the final extremities of internal war, often especially cruel in its forms, as close-range fighting so frequently is. In each case, purely local political ambitions as well as purely local grievances may have sufficed to start the violence, and quite a few internal wars had a colonial or postcolonial dimension also. But the intrusion of bipolar tensions was at least an aggravating factor, often expressed in the tangible form of competitive supplies of arms to insurgents and governments.

Internationally, bipolarity had the opposite effect, at least within the Western camp: instead of dividing, it united peoples or at least governing elites, slighting divergent concerns and suppressing potential contentions to impose an unprecedented soli-

parity. Thus in Western Europe, immediate postwar concerns over the possibility of a German resurgence, and an even more natural resentment against all that was German, might easily have inspired demands for a regime of controls more severe than that of the Versailles treaty; as it was, partition schemes were more or less seriously proposed (one featured the nostalgic touch of a revived dukedom of Burgundy), while deindustrialization on the lines of the Morgenthau plan would no doubt have been widely favored in Western Europe, had not the revealed results of wartime bombing made it seem so utterly unnecessary.

Instead of any of this, the convergent pressures of bipolarity were so intense that they enormously accelerated a process of reconciliation that might otherwise have required decades if accomplished at all. For once, circumstances favored not the urge for revenge but rather a farsighted magnanimity, exemplified by the proposals of the prophet-economist Jean Monnet and his followers. Instead of forced deindustrialization, there was the astonishingly rapid start of outright cooperation in the economic resurgence of West Germany, while the Soviet disposition of German lands in the east, and Soviet control of east-central Germany, rendered moot the issue of partition.

In East Asia, for diverse reasons, Japan's recent victims generally lacked the means even to express their desiderata, and if only because of geographic factors, none had such effective leverage over the processes of Japan's reconstruction as even Belgium had over Germany's recovery. But certainly the bipolar dynamics were manifest in the East also, especially after Korea was pulled apart by them, thereby launching Japan on its ascent to prosperity.

The beneficial inward effect of bipolarity within the Western camp, frequently overlooked when the East-West confrontation itself is deplored, continued after the immediate postwar period and encompassed far more than the urgencies of reconstruction. It certainly had a large role in overcoming entrenched bureaucratic barriers and the resistance of powerful business interests against

the institutionalized liberalization of trade, currencies, and capital transfers that was the foundation of the great post-1945 prosperity. To be sure, as the sole printer of U.S. dollars in a world then very short of them, the United States was initially well equipped in its role as the promoter of economic liberalization; but the dollar shortage soon waned, and without the powerful impulse of bipolarity it is doubtful if the liberalizing effort could have been sustained against the resistance of bureaucrats and businessmen all over Europe (and in Japan too—but very little liberalization was demanded of a country then deemed so ill-fitted to cope with the demands of a competitive world economy).

The solidarity imposed within by conflict without, was so intense that it propelled the European unification movement at an astonishingly rapid pace: it was the same generation of Europeans that had recently been divided into invaders and victims, oppressors and the oppressed, during the most barbaric of wars that collaborated transnationally to create the structures of European unity.

Finally, among many other consequences, bipolarity diminished the resistance of European colonial powers to decolonization. Intermittently advocated by the United States, both for ideological reasons and to deny opportunities for Soviet intrusion, decolonization was primarily the result of local agitation or armed struggle in most of the Asian and North African colonies, but in sub-Saharan Africa it was mostly conceded without a fight by the mid-1960s; that Portugal, by far the feeblest of the colonial powers, was able to resist forcibly for another decade in Angola, Mozambique, its Guinea, and Capo Verde suggests how greatly the process might have been retarded.

Early on, before the bipolar priorities had asserted themselves, the American advocacy of decolonization could still arouse much resentment on the part of the metropolitan powers, as in the case of the Netherlands and its East Indies; later, as in the case of French Indochina, the early advocacy by the United States of a

prophylactic decolonization was notoriously abandoned. But by the later 1950s it was mostly the metropolitan powers themselves that took the initiative, in accordance with their own assessment of the logic of bipolarity.

So general was the intra-Western harmony induced by bipolarity in regard to third areas as well that it is the few cases of disharmony that have attracted attention, notably rivalries over access and influence in the Middle East — including access to oil. The competitive pursuit of all manner of gains by all available means that had been the general rule was thus reduced to a mere exception, and even then of course the means were greatly limited, utterly excluding any threat of force among the Western parties in competition.

What evoked such an entirely unprecedented intra-Western solidarity, was the equally unprecedented character of Soviet revisionism.

First, even in a world which had just experienced the murderous ruthlessness of Nazi Germany and the fanaticism of Imperial Japan in its death throes, the Soviet regime, though not perceived as either especially murderous or at all fanatical, projected a unique implacability. Paradoxically, the Soviet Union's vast losses in the war just ended contributed as much to this as the great strength revealed by its victory.

With their knowledge of how much damage the war had inflicted on their own countries, from worn-out industrial machinery and a depleted agriculture to the destruction of bridges, dams, railway viaducts, and factories, Europeans more than Americans could imagine the vastly greater damage inflicted on the invaded western regions of the Soviet Union and on the Soviet population as a whole. In the immediate aftermath, these losses evoked much sympathy, which compounded the gratitude widely felt for the heroic struggle that had played so large a part in the defeat of Nazi Germany. But the very same estimate of how greatly the Soviet Union had suffered added to the impression of the Krem-

lin's inordinate ruthlessness, when its policies almost immediately seemed to emphasize further aggrandizement rather than reconstruction.

Its combative diplomacy was public evidence of the Kremlin's priorities, evidence manifest as early as the 1946 London conference of foreign ministers; Soviet subversion was much less visible but clearly active in many places, and if very little was then known in detail of Soviet military accumulation, no detailed knowledge was needed, given the plain fact that the Soviet armed forces remained in being on a large scale, when all Western forces had been precipitously demobilized.

Certainly, it was not the Soviet Union's exercise of the normal prerogatives of a victorious Great Power that surprised, shocked, and frightened. Few in the West seriously objected to the annexations that added Finnish Karelia, the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the Koenigsberg district of East Prussia, the eastern provinces of Poland, Czechoslovakia's sub-carpathian Ruthenia, Romania's northern Bukovina and Bessarabia, as well as southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands taken from Japan, to the Soviet Union; and many were perfectly willing to accept some considerable degree of continuing Soviet influence over the countries of Eastern Europe that the Soviet army was still occupying. But it was the evident willingness of the Soviet Union to quarrel with the United States and Britain so soon after the fighting ended, and thus subordinate the needs of internal reconstruction to external ambitions, that revealed a terrifying implacability against the background of desolate Soviet lands and wrecked Soviet cities.

The second attribute that made Soviet conduct especially sinister was the unprecedented secrecy in which it was encompassed. Mussolini's Italy had remained fully open to tourism until its entry into the war, and though they were rather less visited, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan had both allowed foreigners to enter and travel more or less freely, albeit under varying degrees of police surveillance. The Soviet Union, by contrast, was entirely

closed except to such few visitors as it chose to admit, and even then their travels were narrowly circumscribed and assiduously supervised. That the denial of free travel was an old Russian practice was well known but did not diminish suspicion, especially because the denial was enforced in Eastern Europe as well. True, much of Eastern Europe was very remote anyway for many in the West; but for many others, the Eastern Europe that had abruptly become forbidden territory hidden behind impassable barriers was familiar indeed, perhaps only a bus stop away. Moreover, a censorship uniquely comprehensive, and the opaque uniformity of every sort of published information, completed the enclosure of all Soviet-controlled lands behind a perimeter of almost impenetrable secrecy.

To be sure, the denial of travel and the control of all information were customary practices in the Western experience as well, but only in times of war, or when war was thought imminent — hence the fearful suspicion aroused by Soviet secrecy at the time, and long sustained. When we do not know, we construe; and when we know that we are being prevented from knowing, we fear the worst.

The third attribute that made Sovietrevisionism unprecedented was its geographically unlimited scope. Imperial Japan had warred to conquer an East Asian sphere for itself, huge enough but much less than global; Fascist Italy had hoped for a Mediterranean supremacy with East African colonies thrown in, and of Hitler's variable ambitions the most plausible did not extend beyond Europe. But in the Soviet case, not even such outer boundaries could be set. True, even at its peak the Soviet Union lacked a broadly effective worldwide military reach, because it had neither large aero-naval and amphibious forces nor a sufficiently comprehensive network of bases — and it had much less than that during the formative postwar period. In fact, during the first decade after 1945, Soviet military power was essentially confined to the Eurasian landmass, except for the submarine fleet; but though it soon

became the largest in the world and was potentially very effective notwithstanding sundry technical deficiencies, the Soviet strength in submarines could be consequential only in narrowly defined circumstances — the circumstances of a protracted nonnuclear world war.

In subsequent years, the Soviet Union did acquire an oceanic navy, long-range air transports, and also a growing number of overseas staging facilities, yet the perceived geographic scope of Soviet revisionism was by then receding, as it has continued to recede ever since. Ironically, it was precisely when Soviet military strength was geographically most constrained that Soviet ambitions were perceived as most nearly global in its scope, for where the Soviet armed forces could not reach, Communists then strictly obedient to Moscow could act in their place — legally or not, peacefully or not, overtly or covertly — but always with a panoply of sympathizers and unwitting collaborators. It remained for a later era to ridicule fears of a “global Communist conspiracy” at a time when the phrase was encountered only as the stock-in-trade of fund-raisers on the extreme Right, or as the genuine *cri de coeur* of honest paranoids. But in the immediate postwar years, matters were otherwise.

As soon as a new phraseology was issued in Moscow to denounce some Western action or commend some Soviet initiative, exactly the same words would be heard from British shop stewards, East Asian guerillas, Latin American intellectuals, French scientists, Chinese party officials, Italian novelists, Hungarian ministers, and Indian journalists, among others in a still more variegated chorus. Soon those words would be woven into the text of newspaper articles around the world, often with well-known and ostensibly non-communist signatures to enhance their resonance. If the campaign lasted long enough, books might appear to convey its message in more enduring form, then to become part of the intellectual discourse of the time, perhaps being adopted as teaching texts in some cases. Films and the theater were not ne-

glected either within their still longer time constraints, and they too became part of the culture of the times.

If the matter had scientific import, eminent scientists would come forward to add their authority to the accusation or the claim, so that every periodicals library still indelibly records their denunciations of U.S. bacteriological warfare in Korea and their celebrations of the agricultural abundance secured by T. D. Lysenko's genetics. If the matter was literary, litterateurs would perform likewise, denouncing or praising as required, with their influence felt in the editorial office as much as in print, so that anti-Communist writers would find their works rejected (as in Britain Gollancz rejected George Orwell's *Animal Farm*) and their reputations diminished (as Ignazio Silone's was), while party-approved writers would be well published and then generously reviewed. And so it was for every other sector of culture, from archaeology (where the cultural autonomy of the Scythians had to be upheld) to jurisprudence (much exercised by the Rosenberg trial), to linguistics (Stalin's hobby) to zoology (Lysenko again).

All these were mere words, but there were so many of them — to the point where in some countries, such as the Italy of my childhood, policy had to be framed and explicated in the atmosphere created by those words. Within the United States, the influence of the chorus orchestrated from Moscow was mostly minor and perhaps localized; in Britain it was far from overwhelming (Orwell did find another publisher), and in no country that held elections was it sufficient to convert a majority of voters. But Moscow's chorus was far from ineffectual: if it did not often determine policies, it constrained them much more often, even in the United States early on (cf. Harry S. Truman's immediate repudiation of Winston Churchill's "iron curtain" speech of 1946).

Moreover, the mere fact that the public chorus was virtually global in scope suggested that other and less visible activities performed for Moscow's benefit were just as widespread, notably the subversion of ostensibly non-communist institutions, and also espi-

onage. In retrospect, we may perhaps conclude that the sum total of the damage inflicted on the West by all the clamorous postwar cases of ideological espionage was quite small. Even so, we can appreciate the deep anxiety evoked at the time, when the extraordinary variety of the perpetrators, from upper-class Englishmen to Cypriot mechanics, from Canadian nuclear scientists to Israeli colonels, was already known, while the ultimate scope of such hidden affiliations was still unknown.

Certainly Moscow's ability to evoke such disparate loyalties was not at all trivial; it was but a very narrow and rather marginal symptom of the broad and powerful attraction of the Soviet rendition of Communist ideology.

That too was unprecedented. Italian fascism had attracted not a few followers beyond the borders of Italy, but only in Iberia and the Balkans to any significant effect. The more short-lived attraction of German National-Socialism, on the other hand, was confined by its own racial categorizations to the Germans themselves and northern Europeans at most. But the appeal of communism seemed to have no such geographic limits, and contrary to its own doctrine, its attraction was not confined to intellectual and manual workers, so its success did not therefore depend on the support of a large industrial working class, which could exist only in highly developed societies.

Indeed nothing was so important in forming the perception that Soviet revisionism was global in its scope as the campaigns of Communist guerillas in Malaya and Tonkin, and of course the Communist ascendancy in China, all of which were then widely believed to be under the control of leaders entirely loyal to Moscow. When the agitations in Western Europe, the Greek civil war, such episodes as the terrorism of the Bengali Communists, the wholesale subversion of the embryonic East European democracies, and most dramatically, the sudden eruption of the Korean War were all added to the picture, even contemporary observers of most sober disposition could interpret its totality only as a single global

phenomenon, centered on Moscow and directed by the man to whom all Communists everywhere seemed eager to show a most abject deference, Joseph Stalin. There are circumstances in which even a conspiracy theory can satisfy Ockham's precept.

And then of course the Soviet Union was powerful in a military sense as well. The Western past-present of the mid-1950s contained the memory of the Soviet army that had so largely defeated the otherwise most powerful, and undoubtedly the most talented, army the world had ever seen; and by then it also contained the unsettling discovery that Soviet abilities extended to the highest military technologies of the day, nuclear weapons both of the fission kind and of the fusion kind. The Western future-present therefore contained anxious expectations of further Soviet technological advances — and rightly so, for the Sputnik exploit was then imminent.

Civilization — at least Western civilization — was not deliberately placed at risk by nuclearization but was rather thought to be at risk anyway and in need of effective protection, however dangerous its potential consequences. It was in that context that the unprecedented destructive power of nuclear weapons was deemed the only adequate response to the unprecedented threat of a revisionism seen as implacable, exceptionally secretive, and geographically unlimited in scope. The rise of nuclear weapons to the culminating phase of their importance, therefore, reflected the apparent proportionality of their otherwise disproportionate destructive capacity to the perceived enormity of the threat that they were meant to avert. The extremes of nuclearization at its peak thus marked an equilibrium of two opposing forces themselves of extreme intensity.

As against the implacability perceived to emanate from Moscow, a like implacability was cultivated in the declared purpose and detailed procedures of the Strategic Air Command, first established on March 21, 1946, with a fleet of B-29 bombers left over from the war and small stock of fission bombs but expanded dur-

ing the 1950s into a mighty force of medium and heavy bombers, whose crews were relentlessly indoctrinated to accept attack orders that would have inconceivably catastrophic results.

As against the pervasive secrecy in which the Soviet Union existed, which afforded inherent opportunities for the preparation of surprise actions, the Strategic Air Command was equipped, trained, and supplied to maintain large forces always on alert, at times even on airborne alert.

As against the geographically unlimited nature of the perceived threat, the Strategic Air Command was directed to attack the threat at its source, to achieve an equal result regardless of the sector in which a threat might eventuate.

I cannot here attempt a contextual reconstruction of the Soviet nuclearization under way by 1957. It may be noted, however, that from the Soviet point of view, implacability and globality if not secrecy could also be imputed to the United States in some degree. Emulation and economy were also factors — not determining causes of course — in the contemporary Soviet context, in which the United States could be a compelling model even though such imitation was not optimal in all matters. On the other hand, emulation should have been compelling in the British case: if the United States intended to unleash its Strategic Air Command in the event of war, there was little point in keeping more than a thin red line of troops to serve as a trip wire; that indeed was the logic of the 1957 Defence White Paper, but of course the relationship between its proposed decisions and what was actually done was only tangential (British armor and artillery regiments were not disbanded, etc.), because of the usual institutional distortions.

Reverting to the dynamics of denuclearization from the early 1960s, we find them readily understandable in the context of the progressive breakdown of earlier perceptions of Soviet implacability and secrecy. And with a modest allowance for decisional and institutional lags, the timing of the two processes is persuasively congruent.

Soviet implacability was tested and found wanting in the successive Berlin crises of 1960 and 1961 and then most dramatically in the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. Soviet secretiveness remained comprehensive until quite recently, but the secrecy of the Soviet Union was penetrated from 1960 (and most reassuringly), first by high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft and then more broadly by surveillance satellites.

Soviet revisionism, by contrast, continued to be highly dynamic and geographically wide-ranging until very recently, encompassing dozens of countries from Indonesia to Cuba in various ways, before becoming finally manifest in the December 1979 invasion of Afghanistan. But the image of a global threat was nevertheless shattered by the mid-1960s, because of the (delayed) recognition that China was no longer the Soviet Union's ally in any sense, let alone an instrument of its power, and that other Communist countries were variously deviating from the Muscovite orthodoxy (North Korea, Hungary) or weakening alliance links at the state level (Romania), or both (Albania).

And so in an interim conclusion we find that there is one final question that we *can* answer unequivocally: could the overall military balance between the Soviet Union and the United States revert to the largely nuclearized condition of thirty years ago? Or more simply, can Soviet and U.S. nuclear weapons regain the reciprocal importance they once had, with all the risks thereby entailed? The answer is yes, strictly speaking — but only if much of world politics were to change, and not merely governments and policies in Moscow and Washington. Given the transience of the former and the instability of the latter, that should be of some comfort.

II. THE FUTURE OF WAR

In my first lecture, I indulged in the sort of scientism that has been with us since the days of Babylon by proposing a Law of the Conservation of Conflict, whereby, for example, any decline in the Soviet-Western antagonism would have to be compensated by

other oppositions of forces. The Babylonians attempted to translate the predictive success of astronomy into the astrological prediction of human affairs; my own more modest borrowing is from physics — not any modern physics, I am afraid, but the physics one may impute to Herakleitos by way of Diogenes Laertius, that very useful author who disposes of thirty-seven philosophers in ten papyrus rolls. No more than that is the source for my Law, which holds that the total amount of conflict cannot diminish, and only its vectors can change, for it is the clash of opposing forces that sustains the equilibrium of all things existent, including political entities capable of war.

The Vectors of Conflict

If the antagonism between the Soviet Union and the Western alliance continues to diminish, will it be replaced by the clash of North-South opposing forces? The demographic tensions, cultural collisions, and economic resentments already manifest in the overall relations between Latin America and the United States, North Africa and Western Europe, and Russians and Central Asians, lend some plausibility to this straightforward equilibrium solution that would simply rotate the fault line of conflict by ninety degrees. And because for all Europeans, Russians included, the adjacent South is largely Islamic, the ninety-degree solution is that much more plausible, given the exasperated rejection of Western cultural influences by not a few Muslims, and the violent extremism of some. In Western Europe, on the other hand, the Islamic visibility of North African and South Asian migrants is evoking hostile reactions and even seems to be reviving ancient fears of the Saracen in France and Italy.

No such serious cultural strife complicated North-South contentions between the Americas, over illegal migrants, illegal narcotics, and the impeccably legal burden of indebtedness.

Yet even the least weighty of these contentions, the flow of illegal narcotics, can provoke surprisingly intense reactions. A

former secretary of the treasury has, for example, most recently suggested the repudiation of our own currency, in the large denominations supposedly fashionable in Bogotá, at only ten days' notice; such is the frenetic urge to punish the cocaine suppliers, or rather those of them who would inexplicably fail to convert all their bank notes in time, that the cruel dispossession of nameless dollar holders in harsh and bankless parts of the world is overlooked. Also advanced in earnest was the suggestion that all aircraft originating from Latin America should be shot down if they fail to comply with both flight plans and radio instructions from the ground — that procedure may or may not achieve the interception of narcotics, but it would no doubt effect a marvelous improvement in the standards of both navigation and English comprehension. Finally, some members of Congress have called for the most direct remedy of all, the bombardment of coca-growing areas in Latin America, nonnuclear bombardment, I presume. At least one Latin American official has noted that if bombardment is the solution, it would surely be more economical to bomb consuming districts in the United States, rather than producing districts in his own country. In the meantime, Peruvians are regaled with the spectacle of expensive helicopters and expensive U.S. drug-enforcement officials descending on the meager coca fields of penniless migrant families, there solemnly to cut down their only crop while providing no substitute means of sustenance.

Much bitterness is caused by the revealed priorities of such efforts. While the United States manifests such an intense interest in the growing of coca, it shows no interest whatever in the growing of coffee, whose unprecedentedly low prices are at this particular time ruining the middling class of coffee farmers that has long sustained political moderation in half a dozen Latin American countries. Much more broadly, of course, the United States is seen as indifferent or nearly so to the crippling economic travails now widespread in Latin America. The ensuing resentment can only be amplified by the readiness of the United States to proffer

monies and equipment to deal with what remains, after all, a marginal phenomenon for the region as a whole.

To be sure, North-South contentions in the Americas are as nothing when compared with the problems that are beginning to surface elsewhere. Europeans looking South now confront the sinister novelty of the chemical agents, ballistic missiles, and nuclear ventures of North Africa and the Middle East. These emerging capacities for long-range mass destruction present only a very small threat as yet, but they are already setting a new floor on the possible scope of European disarmament. Few Europeans would accept a situation in which a totally denuclearized and largely demilitarized Europe would coexist with heavily armed powers to the South, increasingly equipped with long-range weapons. And even embryonic capacities for mass destruction already add a sharp edge to the accumulating cultural tensions between a Europe liberal and pluralist as never before, and a South wherein the militancy of Islamic defensiveness leads to daily expressions of intolerance. Certainly the increasing rigidity of Islamic practices in reaction to western cultural intrusions, which is in turn increasing the incompatibility of that faith with the requirements of modernization, is leading to an ideological crisis of the first order, which might as easily eventuate in outward explosions as in secularizing implosions.

Yet when all such motives and means of conflict are listed and summed, one still remains with some irritating interpenetrations and some isolated threats, not with a North-South confrontation of opposing forces. Leaving aside the inconceivable case of the Americas, and the hypothetical case of a North-South confrontation within a fragmented Soviet Union, one cannot anticipate the emergence of cohesive arrays of opposing forces even in the case of Europe and its own south. And it may be doubted whether such a confrontation could eventuate within the horizon of useful speculation, given the political disunity that begins on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and the material imbalance between the North and that South in all the potential sources of military power.

True, much has been said in recent years of the diffusion of military power in the global South, and its implications are certainly not to be minimized in particular contexts. Yet the record of the wars of recent years clearly shows that the availability of military equipment for the countries of the South is greater than their ability to provide trained operators for such equipment; and that the availability of trained operators is greater than their ability to provide satisfactory maintenance; and that the availability of properly functioning and adequately maintained units is greater than their ability to provide competent tactical leadership for them; and that the availability of forces properly functioning, adequately maintained, and competently led is greater than their ability to provide effective operational command for such forces. Hence the military yield of acquired equipment can be very low.

While in many parts of the South, the strength in place is already sufficient to inhibit lighthearted expeditionary adventures, it is utterly insufficient to threaten the North in turn. The exception, of course, is the encapsulated threat of bombardment missiles aimed beforehand at fixed targets, which require only routine maintenance in the interim. That particular danger may yet evoke an exceptional response but is unlikely to be the sufficient basis of a militarized North-South confrontation.

A much better equilibrium solution would be the recognition of a common enemy of all mankind in the ecological destructions and disruptions that daily attract our attention. Hopeful signs in that direction abound, above all because the legitimacy of ecological protection nowadays so often seems to prevail over the legitimacy of national-economic interests, both in domestic political debate and in international negotiations. On the other hand, the modalities of ecological protection are advancing much more in the North than in the South, and if the divergence continues, the issue will divide rather than unite.

There is also the worse alternative of the internalization of conflict, whereby the nearly global anti-soviet coalition formed by

the end of the 1970s and the unity of the Soviet bloc itself would both be fractured, by regions and within regions. To that question I propose to return in what follows.

Finally there is the simplest equilibrium solution of them all, a revival of Soviet-Western animosity, perhaps precipitated by a palace revolt that would bring new leaders into the Kremlin, or by a stereotyped regression to tyranny by disenchanting reformers, or even by yet another unexpected upsurge of Soviet military power in technologically advanced forms.

That particular eventuality may seem outlandish in light of present Soviet economic conditions, but Soviet military organizations have a proven capacity for bold innovation beyond the technological standards of Soviet society as a whole, while Western military organizations by contrast tend to devote their resources to the embellishment of established forms, unless forced to do otherwise under external pressure. The budget reductions that reflect today's more relaxed international atmosphere have already resulted in a general slowdown of military innovation in the West, precisely because funds are being transferred from the development of new (and often bureaucratically disruptive) weapons to the upkeep of today's bureaucratically established forces, of the very sort that many Soviet military leaders for their part are surprisingly eager to see reduced; the possibility that they may have innovative purposes of their own should not be dismissed, certainly not without first examining current Soviet military literature on the subject of "reconnaissance-strike complexes" and kindred innovations.

To be sure, the political changes that may yet lead to some sort of more or less liberal Soviet confederation, the rise of many nationalisms old and new that may yet lead to a disaggregated Soviet Union, and the military macro-innovation strategy, if any, are all proceeding on different timetables, while the troubled evolution of the Soviet economy is proceeding on yet another, driven as it is by forces sometimes obscure. That allows ample oppor-

tunities for collisions between the four uncertain vectors of action, and such collisions may totally derail the military strategy that would revive the Soviet-Western confrontation, even if that is not at all its intended goal.

The Parameters of War

So far I have been speaking of confrontations and of conflict but not of actualized conflict in the form of war itself. What is the future of war? Are we simply to accept the despairing commonplace that attributes war to “human nature?” There is a dialectical plausibility even in my jocular Law of the Conservation of Conflict that is lacking in the “human nature” theory of the perpetuity of war. Life is action, and action will evoke reaction, but life need not forever include every particular form of action. The “human nature” theory of the perpetuity of war thus begs the question of why war should continue when all manner of other unfortunate proclivities have not, including cannibalism, slavery, and duelling.⁷

Unfortunately these analogies are not persuasive, because their referents are conditioned by economic and social factors that certainly impinged on them but need not impinge on war. Nor are those analogies as reassuring as some seem to believe; cannibalism and the rest endured on the remote peripheries for a very long time indeed after their disappearance from more advanced parts of the world. Slavery, for example, was already falling into desuetude in the later Roman empire, yet was not everywhere legally abolished until the 1960s, and may even be said to have experienced a sinister revival in the heart of Europe during the Second World War. By that calendar, war could still have the span of a

⁷See, most recently, John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1969). The section that follows echoes the writings of Samuel P. Huntington and most recently his brief summary “No Exit: The Errors of Endism,” *National Interest* 17 (Fall 1989): 3–11.

millennium in more backward settings, even if we were to conclude that it will not occur again among more advanced countries.⁸

The more plausible approach of some students of conflict relies on the inductive method to predict the future of war. Without resting on dubious analogies with unpleasant practices no longer current, their method only compares like with like to classify the internal and external conditions under which states have fought wars and then to assess the scope of war's future prevalence accordingly. By far their most important finding is that in modern conditions democracy may have become war-inhibiting, in a way that it definitely was not at its Greek inception. For example, a very recent examination of belligerent powers between 1816 and 1976 reveals that states of democratic governance have often fought nondemocratic states, as the latter have often fought one another, while states definable as democratic have fought each other only very rarely.⁹ In a recent article, Professor Bruce Russett of Yale University is cited as describing the virtual absence of war among democracies as "perhaps the strongest non-trivial or non-tautological statement that can be made about international relations."¹⁰

If that assessment of the past indeed predicts the future, the scope of possible wars is accordingly reduced. And it might be further reduced if the wider category of "free" states is also regarded as incapable of reciprocal bellicosity. Accepting for the moment the validity of the prediction, how far does it take us? True, even the democratic state is no longer the *rara avis* it once was, now that democracy prevails in the Americas as well as in Europe and Oceania, and is not wholly absent from Asia, which indeed includes India, by far the most populous of democracies.

⁸ Mueller does not deny that.

⁹ Ze'ev Maoz and Nasrin Abdolai, "Regime Types and International Conflict, 1816-1976," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 33 (Mar. 1989): 3-35, as cited by Huntington, "No Exit."

¹⁰Cited by Huntington, "No Exit," p. 6.

And if we adopt the generous categorization of “free” states as now listed in the standard compilation,¹¹ we can arrive at an impressive total of 60 states out of 167 which will also not fight one another according to the prediction.

Definitional issues obviously arise even with the most restricted of these categories. One recalls, for example, that in August 1914 Wilhelmine Germany did have a functioning parliament with the power of the purse over military budgets; admittedly that parliament was not fully representative because the vote was property-weighted, but the Social Democrats nevertheless formed the largest single party at the outbreak of war, and they had usually been described as “anti-militarist” till then. Other objections have also been raised to challenge the validity of the finding that democracies do not fight one another, including the implications of the small size of the sample for studied periods when democracy was still a very unusual form of government.¹²

In a more general sense, however, the proposition that democracies are not apt to fight one another is certainly confirmed by the empirical evidence — still proceeding inductively — and can gain deductive support from the converse of some positive theories of war.

We might accept the common notion, for example, that many wars break out because prewar crisis communications among the future belligerents have broken down or have been willfully interrupted, thus preventing the peaceful resolution of the precipitating disputes. The converse of that theory is that the open communications that occur within democratic states automatically ensure their intercommunication also, thereby perpetuating at least implicit negotiations that can allow the crisis to be peacefully resolved.

Another commonplace theory is that many wars happen because their expected costs and benefits are assessed optimistically

¹¹The 1989 Freedom House survey, as cited in *Idem*, p. 6.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 7.

by elites who regard war as socially enhancing, inducing the overestimation of its benefits and the underestimation of its costs, in part because elite members expect to be sheltered from the privations of war, if not its dangers. The converse of that social theory of war — a version of the militarism thesis — is that in the democratic state the costs and benefits of war are assessed by the entire electorate, and because the nonelite majority has no privileged claim on its putative benefits, while being fully exposed to its possible costs, war will often be judged undesirable.

There are still other positive theories of war whose converse is relevant to the argument, but if we leave them aside and simply accept the proposition that democratic states do not fight one another, we would still have to anticipate an abundance of wars in the future among the much larger number of states that are not democratic, and between the latter and democracies.

The easy prediction that war does have a future, and quite possibly a larger future than its recent past,¹³ is actually irrelevant to the specific concern that nowadays motivates correlative studies of war and democracy: the question of postbipolar and postnuclear Europe. That, to be sure, is only one of the cases that correspond to the third alternative under the constant-conflict assumption: namely, the internalization of conflict. It is obvious enough, for example, how conflict may be internalized in the Pacific region, notably between the United States and Japan, though that case remains irrelevant to the subject of war itself.

Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States had barely begun to improve when the reciprocal attitudes of Americans and Japanese already started to deteriorate, judging by the evidence of opinion polls. Characteristically, expressed Japanese attitudes are more homogenous and grouped around standard themes: Americans are lazy, undisciplined, and self-indulgent, and their demands for an open, high-consumption Japanese economy

¹³ Bipolar conditions amplified some conflicts but suppressed others (Greece/Turkey; Hungary/Romania, etc.).

would inflict those vices on the Japanese and also specifically attack the integrity of Japanese culture, notably rice farming with its entire mystical-nostalgic superstructure.

U.S. attitudes are diffracted between popular and elite levels and also show much regional variance, but there is a common denominator in the rather belated discovery that the Japanese political system assiduously promotes the producer interest, full employment, and a high savings' rate, which results in the accumulation of capital, while the U.S. political system has been promoting the consumer interest, which results in the accumulation of debt. Because U.S. practices are seen as normal by Americans under still largely unquestioned free-trade assumptions, Japanese wealth-and-work maximizing practices are seen as predatory. The attitudinal clash has naturally become sharper as the Japanese accumulation of capital and the American accumulation of debt have both continued.

Yet one cannot see how a classic pattern of deterioration might ensue, with economic quarrels leading to political quarrels leading in turn to military confrontation. Because of its proximity if nothing else, Japan would still be in need of protection even if the Soviet Union were to become far less threatening than it remains. On the other hand, almost the entire Japanese political elite from the Left to the Center-Right continues to regard military self-reliance as totally unacceptable, not because of its costs or even its security risks, but rather because it would mean relying on Japanese military institutions. The latter are not much more internally cohesive and externally exclusive than other Japanese institutions, but that is quite sufficient to make their inherent capacity for coercion seem dangerous to many Japanese. To put it crudely, most Japanese fear their own virtues of inner-group loyalty and strict hierarchical obedience when they extend to armed forces. What outsiders would see as military self-reliance, most Japanese would see as excessive dependence on deeply mistrusted institutions. Hence their consensus persists that security is best obtained from U.S. protection, precluding all thought of a confrontation.

Still under the rubric of the internalization of conflict within blocs that ensues from the decline of conflict between them, the U.S.-Chinese case is already actual, not hypothetical. It is striking to note how quickly relations between Beijing and Washington have deteriorated since the waning of the Soviet-Western confrontation, ostensibly because of acts of repression actually far milder than those under way when U.S.-Chinese relations began to flourish in the mid-1970s.

One could continue in this vein to examine U.S.-European relations and to speculate on the further scope for the internalization of conflict within the Soviet Union itself; but it is the intra-European case that is the present focus of interest, and appropriately so.

Among all wars large and small, ancient and modern, it is still the two European wars which became world wars that loom largest in the consciousness of observers on both sides of the Atlantic. Hence the possibility of another European war between the Soviet and Western blocs has been a central preoccupation of our times; and because that particular war has been avoided, the entire post-1945 period has been called the Long Peace, with capital letters.¹⁴ Notwithstanding the many and bloody wars of our times, we understand that formulation, for which we also have a widely accepted double explanation: bipolarity and nuclear weapons, whereby bipolarity displaced the fault line of conflict eastward, imposing cooperation on the former war-initiating antagonists of Central and Western Europe, while nuclear weapons inhibited the direct expression of the Soviet-Western antagonism in the form of outright war.

Thus the weakening and possible end of bipolarity, and the related progress of denuclearization, obviously raise the questions of whether war might return to its former European habitat, even as its possibility wanes between the larger blocs in apparent dissolution.

¹⁴ By John Lewis Gaddis.

Some, however, appear to regard the post-1945 absence of war from its European locus classicus as the natural consequence of this century's two most painful lessons in the undesirability of war — lessons which they believe will not be forgotten. Others are not so confident of the retentive ability of states in the guise of history students, recalling the frequency with which those ravaged by war have willingly warred again.

As of now, uneasy speculations about the possible unification of the two Germanies have already revealed an anxiety seemingly widespread elsewhere in Europe. Some dismiss the questions by ridiculing the possibility that Germany might fight France again, or any other country of Western Europe. But of course another German war is not the issue that presents itself; what motivates present anxieties is not an imaginary war that remains unimaginable but rather the weight of Germany in all economic transactions, and more especially in the competitive allocation of costs and benefits within the European community. Those allocations are determined in myriad small decisions and some large ones that are shaped by coalitions that still form on national lines, and the Federal Republic of Germany is already the strongest single state within that particular nonmilitary balance of power.

Thus even if a long-term progression from economic-political competition within the European community to any sort of military confrontation is ruled out as a permanent impossibility, the anxieties provoked by the addition of East Germany to the Federal Republic need not therefore be ridiculed. East Germany, after all, has the strongest economy in Eastern Europe, and its weight would be added to an already established West German economic preponderance in Western Europe. By way of comparison, one wonders how observers in the United States would now view the reunification of Japan, if that country had till now been diminished economically by the existence of a Soviet client state across a demarcation line in northern Honshu.

A striking aspect of the reemerged German question is its subterranean quality — for of course senior officials and elected leaders elsewhere in Europe continue publicly to assert their full support for unification, even while expressing their opposition in private.¹⁵ This is not the only exception to open intra-European discourse, but it is suggestive nevertheless.

As against such diffused anxieties, there is the widespread belief that since 1945 Europe has progressed very far in the long-term cultural evolution described by the useful term *debellicization*, a coinage attributed to Professor Sir Michael Howard.¹⁶ A process that began during the First World War, and which was already manifest before the Second, in the visible reluctance of most Germans as much as other Europeans to go to war, *debellicization* at the popular level may be simplified as a loss of interest in the excitements and adventures of war and a heightened awareness of its sufferings and dangers. At the elite level, on the other hand, the same process is expressed by the delegitimization of the use of war, and even of the threat of war, as an instrument of statecraft. That some such process has been under way is undeniable, and if one further believes that it has sufficiently progressed and is also irreversible, *debellicization* alone can be held to rule out another European war, no matter how matters may evolve outside Europe.

To be sure, it is possible to slight the broad evidence of *debellicization* equally derivable from the contents of mass culture and from expressed elite attitudes by pointing to the discordant evidence, such as the apparently widespread British eagerness to fight for the reconquest of the Falkland Islands in 1982; the continued approval of French public opinion not only for several military interventions in Africa but even for a destructive commando raid executed in peaceful New Zealand; and most strikingly per-

¹⁵ But not Italy's current prime minister and former foreign minister, Giulio Andreotti.

¹⁶ Howard's rendition is "debellation"; the shorter word, however, connotes an imposed, involuntary, renunciation of war.

haps, the recent acceptance by most Italians of the deployment of Italian warships in the Persian Gulf, which entailed the definite possibility of fighting and casualties.

The debellicization thesis can withstand all such contrary examples, because none of those military ventures came close to the proportions of another European war, or threatened in any serious way the security of homeland territories. On the other hand, most observers would agree that the debellicization thesis does not in any case apply to all European societies; certainly neither Turkey nor Greece are debellicized, judging by the evidence of their mass media, and in Eastern Europe at least other such exceptions could be found.

More broadly there is a question of reversibility. It is not clear, for example, if the recently murderous behavior of European and especially British football crowds implies the reversibility of the process, or, to the contrary, represents a venting of emotions that denotes the debellicization already accomplished and facilitates its further progress. If football mayhem, of all things, turns out to be the moral equivalent of war, the trade would not be a bad one.

But one cannot overlook the possibility of unexpected resurrections: who would have thought that astrology would be better attended in the 1980s than a century ago? And it is recorded fact that Germany was much advanced in debellicization by the late 1920s yet much less so by 1939, and however irrelevant the Falklands example may be, Britain seemed much more debellicized in 1981 than in 1982. Thus although we have all learned to attend assiduously to the study of mentalities, this observer at least would prefer to find a more concrete substitute for the conflict-displacing qualities of bipolarity and the conflict-suppressing qualities of nuclear weapons.

That is why the proposition that democracies do not fight one other can be more reliably comforting. The assumption that the democracies of Western Europe are sturdy and that European states released from the sphere of Soviet control would also be-

come democratic seems reasonably safe; hence the correlation that virtually rules out war among democracies may be held to rule out another European war in equal degree.

If inductive correlations do not satisfy, I would timidly propose yet another sub-Herakleitan equilibrium theory, hinged on a different categorization of states that distinguishes between those that are primarily redistributive and those that are not. In the latter, of whatever kind, the object of the internal opposition of forces is the allocation of power. Hence all such states can improve on a purely internal equilibrium, certainly divisive and possibly unstable, by seeking to achieve national cohesion through the outward projection of power against other states. I am referring to the familiar pattern whereby internal disequilibria are vented in external action.

In primarily redistributive states, on the other hand, the object of the internal opposition of forces is the allocation of income and wealth, and external action cannot therefore ameliorate internal disequilibria; on the contrary, to the extent that it absorbs resources, it can only sharpen the competition for income and wealth. When the booty is at home, the classic motives of war become contradictory, with greed serving to moderate the urge for conquest, the lust for glory, and their modern equivalents.

If a still more concrete reassurance is needed, there is the thesis, notably proposed by Krishnaswamy Subrahmanyam, according to which the industrialized core of Europe is, in effect, booby-trapped against war, to the point where the inhibiting factor of nuclear weapons has become quite unnecessary.¹⁷ Subrahmanyam has noted that the debate on conventional war is still based on extrapolations of Second World War armored maneuvers and bombardments by air and by artillery — extrapolations that fail to take into account the post-1945 transformation of the terrain. The

¹⁷“Non-provocative Defence and the International Environment,” in *Non-Provocative Defence: The Search for Equal Security*, ed. Jasjit Singh and Vatroslav Vekaric (New Delhi: Lancer Press, 1989), pp. 169ff.

latter, he points out, now contains many large nuclear-power reactors, a vastly expanded chemical industry that processes and stores substances much more insidiously lethal than before, and also an abundance of plastics in ordinary housing that generate lethal pyrotoxins when set on fire. Subrahmanyam therefore argues that countries can reliably be dissuaded from war by the fear of “100 Chernobyls and 10,000 Bhopals” in the crowded European setting, whose effects would not respect national borders. May he be right.

If we decide that we may leave the “internalization” hypothesis fairly reassured that a European war remains most improbable, what then is the scope for war elsewhere? We have already seen that there is no barrier of democratic governance to the ten thousand possible wars between the hundred or so “nonfree” states (if we deem contiguity unnecessary in the missile age, and allow for only two-sided wars), nor to the many more possible wars between the latter and the “free” states.

Even without the impulse of the ideological struggle between Marxism-Leninism and democratic capitalism, territorial and other particular quarrels will no doubt suffice to provoke wars. But is there truly no ideological rivalry waiting its turn to energize and organize conflict once again? That there is not is of course the premise of the recent advertisement of the end of history.¹⁸

It was odd indeed to see Hegel cited so reverently in that writing to sustain the most un-Hegelian proposition that because Western liberalism — or democratic capitalism as I would qualify it — has defeated the challenges of fascism and then of communism it will now remain forever in victorious solitude, without a further challenge that can refuel the motor of history.

For my part, I would already identify a competing ideology in the localist and environmentalist amalgam that might be called “communitarianism,” which rejects the efficiencies of the market and therefore the market itself and therefore, even if unwittingly,

¹⁸Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” *National Interest* 16 (Summer, 1989): 3–18.

the democratic processes that the market sustains by distributing power as well as goods and services.

While the wholly superior performance of democratic capitalism in providing widespread prosperity is being universally accepted, “communitarianism” reacts against its integral market dynamics, which reduce the natural environment to an array of commodities to be bought and sold, and which disrupt established communities and social relations by the ceaseless change they demand. Labor-market dynamics, to cite the most obvious example, promote the efficiency-maximizing flow of individuals to new employments in localities perhaps quite distant by offering greater individual remuneration; in this process, residential stability is only a rigidity, a harmful impediment to efficiency. In that respect, “economic man” must be fully alienated man, ready to abandon friends, neighbors, and extended family for merely incremental material rewards. More broadly, under democratic capitalism, it is the market that determines the spatial distribution of economic activity, with infrastructures and housing left to follow in turn, in a process that forces into existence abrupt gatherings of the unrelated while it diminishes or fragments established communities.

The inherent conflict between the economy and community has of course long been recognized, but when democratic capitalism first intervened to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and liberate individuals imprisoned in narrowly restrictive traditional societies, its alienating side effects were easily accepted as well worth the price. The very success of democratic capitalism, however, depreciates its continued achievements. The greater the supply of goods and services, the greater the freedom from imprisoning traditions already achieved, the less likely are the already free and prosperous to accept increments of prosperity and freedom as sufficient compensation for the environmentally disruptive and socially alienating effects of the market.

The strength of communitarianism is already manifest in the antigrowth policies of an increasing number of local authorities

throughout the industrialized world — policies seemingly motivated by purely localized considerations yet paralleled so widely — and in the steadily increasing environmentalist resistance to the logic of the market. In addition, religious fundamentalisms — Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, and Jewish alike — must also be recognized at least in part as communitarian reactions.

It only remains for a Great Power to emerge which will instrumentalize communitarianism, unless it is the latter that will instrumentalize and fragment the powers large and small. If so, Herakleitos stands ready to remind us that the alternative to the harmony induced by the clash of symmetrically opposing forces is chaos.

