

The news is not all bad about conflict in the world outside the East-West arena. In fact, there have been huge positive spillovers from the improvement in East-West relations, and there is an unprecedented opening to strengthen systems to enhance world security. There are also major new dangers of regional instability, conflict and war on the horizon. A failure to seize the current opportunity and introduce new systems of order in the Third World could lead, within a few decades, to a world security situation every bit as menacing as that of the Cold War at its height, and much more unstable.

Perhaps, the truly momentous question of our times is not, as the American analyst would have it, whether history is at an end because of the ending of an epic struggle of ideology and arms-building between two major powers of the European/North Atlantic world. Rather, we can ask whether world history will now shift peaceably or less peaceably to reflect the struggles and aspirations of the four-fifths of humanity who have been largely outside these self-preoccupied rivalries among "Europeans."

The "European" world can now either slide from the narcissism of "European confrontation" to that of "European cooperation" or it can seize the chance to examine the world-views of those outside. The billions of people whose countries are not members of NATO or the Warsaw Pact are deeply conscious that they have been held as powerless hostages to the threat of global nuclear annihilation because of the hostility between these two blocs. Their own security concerns, as nations and individuals, have been compelling by any standard of human history and they have been left to fester, or even been aggravated by the actions of the two northern blocs.

Leaders and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America will welcome the easing of the global threat of superpower nuclear war. They will watch to see if the thawing of East-West relations, and the reduction of superpower competition in their own regions, will lead to more constructive attention to their problems or, on the other hand, to even greater marginalization of the Third World. If the latter is the case, the result will be an intensification of the pernicious drug traffic, of global environmental degradation, and of international terrorism. The combination of deepening alienation and spreading awareness and technological access in the Third World, together with the vulnerability of modern advanced societies, could well come to represent a primary security threat.