

on measures of disarmament. I agree that such beliefs tend to reinforce the divergence of interests, but I also believe there is evidence that common ground exists and can be gradually enlarged.

COMMON INTERESTS

The first common interest is clearly mutual survival. Soviet policy has come increasingly to give priority to this goal, with its implication of "live and let live", both in the military and political sense. The joint interest in stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons to other countries, and in radical reductions of stockpiles, is both genuine and growing. So too is the interest in preventing accident or mis-communication, as recent proposals for joint control centres demonstrate.

Associated with this interest are concerns about regional conflict and world order, driven in part by the growth of terrorism. It is a common assumption that the Soviet Union encourages terrorism, perhaps because we tend to identify terrorism with the PLO and other groups which are regarded in Soviet eyes as fighting for "national liberation". There is a need to look at this issue more closely. It may well be that Soviet policy is moving towards traditional Western views of conflict control though third party settlement and mediation, especially in the Middle East, although there is unlikely to be any acceptance of the Western assumption that a long-range status quo is either possible or desirable. Indeed this assumption that the status quo among nations is something to be preserved and buttressed by international law, as understood in the West, and that a new international economic order, and perhaps political order, would be "illegal", is rejected by most of the members of the United Nations. But short of this assumption, there is reason to believe the Soviet Union will continue to advocate prudence to its friends and to be ready to co-operate quietly with its so-called enemies.

A third and emerging area of joint interest is disaster relief, whether it be famine in Africa or the pollution of the oceans and forests. The USSR occupies twelve percent of the surface of the earth. It has immense reserves of fuel and minerals. It stands to lose much from degradation of the environment, and it contributes to such degradation. Equally, it depends more than most countries on imports of food, whether grain from the West or fish from the world's oceans.

Some of these kinds of mutual interests (and there are others, such as the joint exploitation of Siberian resources) began to be explored in the era of détente, and had significant effects on Soviet perceptions. They had less effect in the West, except for the growing popular anxiety about nuclear war. The

conflict of interests resumed its preponderent place in the arena of public attention, although the fear of nuclear war has remained a strong deterrent to rash behaviour. But now we are at a turning point again, as a new Soviet leader looks for ways of breaking with the past. The twenty-seventh Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1986 could be the most important since that of 1956, when Khrushchev set a new course. Scholars, serious journalists, and the interested public in the West should take this opportunity to look anew at the myths and realities of the relationship of East and West.

NOTES

1. Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, Penguin Books, 1979, pp. 181.
2. George Urban, "A Dissenter as a Soviet Man: A Conversation with Alexander Zinoviev II," *Encounter*, May 1984, pp. 34.
3. Isaiah Berlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 22.
4. "Secretary's Interview on 'This Week with David Brinkley' on March 17, 1985," *Department of State Bulletin*, May 1985, pp. 37.
5. Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet Experience*, Oxford University Press, pp. 37.
6. George Kennan, "Reflections (Soviet-American Relations)," *The New Yorker*, September 1984, pp. 60.
7. Marshall Shulman, *Beyond the Cold War*, Yale University Press, 1965.
8. Richard Nixon, "Superpower Summitry," *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1985, pp. 6.

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