

The Third World and the Cold War

make the US more defensive about developments abroad when other countries can be more relaxed.

The rest of the West

It may be that the close involvement of European countries with countries in the Third World over a long period of time has given them a different perspective on events there — an ability to situate political trends and patterns in a longer-term historical context. Canada's own experience in the Commonwealth and la Francophonie has something of that effect. This view of the world is less concerned with ideological competition, for a variety of reasons: our countries share democratic ideals and belief in the primacy of the private sector; but they also are more relaxed and employ a broader mix of public-private policy instruments.

And even assessments of how the USSR has been doing in the Third World have varied. Europeans have considered that the Soviet Union has had at best only a mixed record of success. Of the three basic instruments of Soviet policy in the Third World — ideological, economic, and military — the ideological has become increasingly inapplicable to most Third World political situations and much less attractive to this generation of Third World leaders, particularly after the invasion of Afghanistan. The old notion that anti-colonialism is a natural bedfellow of Soviet "anti-imperialism" has lost the appeal it had in the 1950s except, perhaps, in Central America where repressive right-wing regimes have fostered armed resistance movements whose rhetoric often seems to resemble the independence movements of a generation ago.

Soviet economic involvement with the Third World is concentrated on rigidly administered and inefficient projects in heavy industry and an overloaded public sector. Their success records are not impressive.

Probably the only area in which the Soviet Union has been moderately successful has been in military aid and defence agreements. But even here, such partners in military procurement as Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Algeria and even Libya, have all maintained their independence from the USSR and have indeed often taken policy approaches directly inimical to Soviet interests. Some erstwhile allies — Egypt and Somalia — became active foes. In fact, it could be argued that the only two long-term successes the USSR has really shown to date are Cuba and Vietnam: close and powerful allies, to be sure, in the context of their potential for problem-making, but very atypical among nations.

So the overall view of most countries in the Alliance is that time is indeed on the side of the West, and that the important thing is to remain flexible as to what is going on in the Third World and not to side with reactionary forces there for the sake of short-term preoccupations about ideology or possible Soviet interests.

What's to be done?

This assessment is drawn from a considerable amount of common ground based on shared economic interests, democratic values, and recognition that the USSR has to be watched warily. The allies need to concentrate on the ground they have in common, so that differences of outlook do not infect other areas of West-West relations. The mood of growing unilateralism in the US Congress is ominous. It has its roots in the notion that the US is suffering from unfair economic competition, as well as from unfair bur-

recognize as the post-détente era. Indeed, some suggest they reflect different evaluations of détente itself. Détente was seen to have worked in the economic interests of Western Europe, as well as in the interests of divided families and people who live there. This was the "kleine détente" whose benefits were considered in Europe to be divisible from what was happening elsewhere in the world. Europeans were reluctant to see the Soviet Union wholly in adversarial terms. They were repelled by the invasion of Afghanistan but could not agree there was a need to link economic relations with the USSR, or arms control, which had their own objective criteria of success, to events elsewhere, outside Europe altogether.

The US has an easier time in making this linkage. In large part, this flows from the US global role. The United States is a superpower. In some ways, it is the only full superpower. While the Soviet Union may have reached a more or less equal superpower status militarily, depending on your point of view, it is not by any means on the same level as the United States in economic achievement or in its international presence.

It is clear to us, who are not superpowers, that superpowers do behave differently. They have to. First, each is conscious of its relative position on an issue vis-à-vis the other superpower. It is a sort of global role consciousness. It is mostly a function of the global contest which is going on, but it also flows from the unique responsibilities of the US for maintaining a credible deterrent. On the one hand, there is the strategic arms relationship. On the other, there is the wariness about the world role of the other superpower. In its activities and positions, the United States has to be careful about the signals it gives the Soviet Union in its response to developments in one part of the world or another. The wrong signal could lead to miscalculation and the ultimate tragedy.

Détente divided

From this emerges a view on the part of the United States that the Soviet Union cannot separate the quality of its relations with the US from its activities elsewhere in the world. In the language and prospects of a decade ago, the US position would be that détente was indivisible; what the Soviet Union does determines US confidence over the full range of relations, including most acutely the verifiability of arms control agreements.

Europeans tend to assess USSR behavior differently, or at least to limit its applicability to other areas and exercises in which they have an objective interest. This may reflect a genuine difference of view as to the width of international activities that détente was meant to cover in the first place. But the overall point is that the superpower role of the US in its relationship with the USSR tends to inform its view of local crises in the world. These East-West considerations are less apparent to its allies, which may also have world roles, but not the global strategic role of the superpower.

Another major distinguishing feature of the United States is the extent of its bilateral interests with almost every country of the world, based upon the wide-ranging economic activities of the US abroad and specifically on US-based multinational corporations. US investment abroad is central to US trade. There is nothing wrong with this. But the extent of American exposure in the world can