

moralistic language (of ideology, if you like), perhaps as an unconscious repudiation of the sin of "imperialism", which both associate with the bad old days of European hegemony.

DIFFERENT INTERESTS

The conflict over interests is best described, in the phrase of Marshall Shulman as "a limited adversary relationship." Writing in 1965, he described the essential character of East/West relations as the pressure of the USSR to increase its power and influence in the world, but he also argued that the elements of continuing conflict were neither "total nor absolute", and he saw the need to draw the Soviet Union into accepting "international processes that make possible adjustments without war."⁷ This in fact began to happen over the next decade, both through the SALT process and at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Yet by the end of the 1970's serious scholars, such as Shulman, were questioning the very possibility of reaching stable solutions based on a balance of power. The Soviet view of the world balance as inherently dynamic and bound to evolve in favour of the forces of "national liberation", remained the same. And it coincided with events in the Middle East, Africa and Indochina which suggested to many that détente was a mirage. The invasion of Afghanistan and the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua drove home the point and appeared to establish a double standard for great power intervention in the domestic affairs of nearby states.

I would argue that the conflict of interests finds its main source in Europe, where Soviet and Western security interests clash most directly. Other Soviet neighbours, especially China, are also seen in Moscow to represent a security threat to the USSR, but with the notable exceptions of Norway and Turkey, they are not allies of the USA. None allow American troops to be based on their soil. The analogy with Cuba and Nicaragua is of some interest. The Soviet view of its commitments to Eastern Europe, sometimes called the Brezhnev doctrine, is based primarily on security concerns, although it is dressed up in ideological clothes. Distant friends, such as Cuba and Nicaragua, are in a different category, and even Afghanistan, in my view, would be allowed to revert to a non-communist political system if that in the end were the price of Soviet withdrawal.

In any event, it is surely misleading to assert, as some continue to do, that the USSR is deliberately intent on extending its control over the whole of Eurasia. The actual record of the past forty years belies this view. And how would such control be exercised, unless it is assumed that every communist

party in Europe and Asia is ready not only to take power but to obey the dictates of Moscow; or, if not, that Soviet troops and arms are in unlimited supply? The view from Moscow, on the contrary, is not of opportunities for expansion waiting to be seized, but of threats to the maintenance of such control and influence that can still be exercised. Both the Polish and Afghanistan crises were interpreted from this perspective.

Despite the new tensions of the past five years, the adversarial relationship remains limited because neither side has dared to transgress what the other perceives to be the boundaries of its own vital interests. Thus the *cordon sanitaire* remains in place in Eastern Europe, shaky as it may be. The Koreans have learned to co-exist. China has been careful not to ally itself with either adversary. An uneasy stand-off continues in the Middle East, where Soviet interests are important and imply preventing the development of a situation that could lead to Soviet military involvement. Soviet help to Cuba and Nicaragua is governed by an acute appreciation of what the USA would regard as threats to its security, and such help as it gives to friends in Africa has not led to significant change in the politics of that continent. The SALT limits continue to be respected, although we are approaching a time when both sides may perceive that vital interests are at stake because of the assumed capacity of the other to deliver a first strike. A first strike capacity, however, is an abstraction which strategists and others often manipulate to justify new weapons and new concepts of defence. No political leader would engage such a capacity unless crisis escalated out of control. But for that to happen, miscalculation, mistrust and fear would have to run deep. We come, therefore, to the question of perceptions.

DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS

The adversary relationship is based on a number of perceptions which are clearly correct. Examples of these are that the USA and the USSR are natural rivals because of their size, power and influence, independent of competing ideologies; that, in addition, each questions the political legitimacy of the other; and that, finally, modern technology has expanded this rivalry to global proportions.

The major misperception in my view is the fear that "imperialism" on the one hand, or "communism" on the other, is bound in some sense to expand at the expense of the other. Pravda editorials on the crisis in Poland in 1980-81 maintained that it was inspired and fomented by Western "imperialism" with a view to undermining the "socialist camp." A somewhat similar American view, ex-