

If this approach were to come to typify Soviet foreign policy we should have less to fear from its advancement. This is certainly the most striking example we have yet seen of the Soviet use of state power for peaceful purposes.

Another part of the answer is that official Soviet doctrine holds that as a corollary of the decisive strength of the Communist world in the present stage of international relations, the "imperialist" world has gone over to the counter-offensive. Seeing their power inexorably slipping away from them, the "imperialists" are said to be turning desperately to military means to retain it. It is in these terms that events in the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and sometimes Indonesia are accounted for. In these circumstances, the U.S.S.R. maintains that it has no choice, it is its "sacred duty" to give moral and material assistance to "peoples fighting for freedom and independence". The mix of moral with material, as we have seen, varies nevertheless according to the overriding interests of the U.S.S.R.

Finally, and this is a point of very special interest, the U.S.S.R. and its allies are inhibited from acknowledging the primacy of their national interests as states over the world revolutionary role they have traditionally assumed. This inhibition goes very deep. In the words of Raymond Aron, the Soviet Union "does not wish to disavow the ideocratic nature of its stage, nor can it do so. It will not admit to being a state 'like any other state', with national interests, for this would undermine the foundations of the regime".

Here we are back at the question of the role of ideology in Soviet policy. From the very beginning, its first and major function has been legitimization; the Soviet regime rests its claim to the exclusive loyalty of its people fundamentally on its revolutionary mission, and this has been preached incessantly for nearly 50 years. Unable to maintain with any hope of success that Soviet society is yet the best of all possible societies in a material sense, it has relied ultimately on its claim to moral superiority, and this has meant its claim to be fighting for the oppressed of all the world. As the revolutionary era of the U.S.S.R. itself slips into the past and popular ardour cools, the regime seeks increasingly to keep the spirit alive by identification first with Cuba, then with Vietnam.

It may thus be argued that the continuance of the Soviet system in its traditional form depends upon the maintenance of at least the appearance of world revolutionary leadership. And appearance might be enough, were it not for the determination of the Chinese to expose what they consider the betrayal of the world revolutionary cause by the revisionism of the Soviet leaders. This challenge the Soviet Union finds intolerable, and this is the remaining reason, and some would argue the most compelling reason, why the U.S.S.R. at this time cannot consult only that national interest which seems to dictate an accommodation with the West but must continue, in deeds as well as words, to try to make good its claim to leadership of a world revolutionary movement.

Returning to the Soviet Union and its allies, then, it is evident that the pluralistic but still basically united "East" is faced with a set of apparently contradictory choices in foreign policy. On the one hand, the perpetuation of its own social and political system and the retention of control over the international Communist movement, a weapon which has always been considered essential to the eventual triumph of that system, as well as a