

Part II - Foreign Policy Considerations

A. Technology transfers and East-West relations

East Block countries have little to offer us in the way of technological and industrial innovation. Because they lag behind the West economically, they tend instead to be eager customers for our innovations. This presents problems in relation to:

- competition among western nations to sell their technologies to these countries;
- the requirements of allied security which, particularly because of the potential military applications of certain products and processes developed in the West, could be threatened by a massive, blind transfer of new technologies.

The debate over these problems has troubled the American administration for some time and has affected its relations with its allies to the extent that, on several occasions, foreign participants have been excluded from seminars and symposiums held in the United States - even in the universities - on subjects considered sensitive. Needless to say, such restrictions give American firms an edge in areas where they have exclusive knowledge.

As early as 1950, a paper prepared for NAMRAD mentioned the commercial restrictions on joint ventures in the military field.

"Firms of all countries are reluctant to release detailed information to firms of other countries unless some commercial agreement is arranged. How patent and proprietary rights are to be protected in the context of full collaboration is a serious problem. Unless there is a complete link on a firm-to-firm level for each weapon* considered for cooperative action, and a readiness to make available expertise which is in the possession of industry, the opportunity for valuable work will be sterilized."

* ("Weapon" could be replaced by "product/process.")

The Corson Report was commissioned by the Academy of Sciences and the US Department of Defense in 1982 to clarify circumstances in which such restrictions would be justified - and to which they would be limited. As expected, in so changeable a field, directives can be issued in only the vaguest of terms, thereby satisfying no