

## Letters to the Editor

rorism are in direct contravention of international law and of the duty of states to respect the sovereignty and independence of other states, and not to intervene in the affairs of another state.

A balanced and just international order could only be achieved if we denounce inconsistencies and double standards not only in the policies of the East European and Third World states, but also in our Western democracies. Expediency should not be permitted to override the rule of law.

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Sir,

I am disappointed in William Galbraith's letter. [See *International Perspectives* January/February 1988, Ed.] I had anticipated that NATO supporters would challenge the basic assumption of my paper, namely that the benefits of membership in the Atlantic Alliance no longer outweighed the costs, and that Canadian interests might now be better served through a policy of non-alignment. In particular, I expected those who supported NATO to as-

sail me with substantive evidence to show how membership in that organization bought Canada real influence at the council tables of Europe and North America, how NATO membership buttressed our sovereignty, and how it has made an irreplaceable contribution to Canadian and Western European security.

Mr. Galbraith did not do this. For the most part he quibbled over non-essential detail, employing as he progressed one-sided, misleading or inaccurate arguments. For example, his assertion that Canada was automatically involved in imperial conflicts prior to 1931 and that avoiding alliances was not even an issue is nothing short of astounding, given Prime Minister Mackenzie King's well-known reaction to the 1922 Chanak crisis and Canada's near fanatical adherence to the policy of "no commitments" between the wars. Similarly, his claim that Western intervention in the Russo-Finnish Winter War "softened" Soviet terms at the Treaty of Moscow is simply wrong. The terms extracted by the Russians through the Treaty of Moscow in March 1940 were more severe than the terms offered the Finns in February 1940 — that is before the Allied offer of direct military assistance to Finland, and these in

turn were more severe than those demands made by Moscow in October 1939, which eventually led to the outbreak of the Winter War. These are only a few of the questionable assertions contained in the letter, but the overall impression is that Mr. Galbraith harbors a very selective view of history.

Mr. Galbraith is closer to the truth when he observes that forty-two years is not a long time historically speaking, and that many of the political consequences of the war remain with us today. This, however, is not the same as saying that political conditions created by the Second World War are the same today as they were thirty-eight years ago. Clearly they are not. The Europe of 1988 is a far cry from the Europe of 1949. Europe no longer needs Canada and Canada no longer contributes significantly to the security of Western Europe. Thus Canadian interests would be better served by a policy of non-alignment than through continued membership in an outdated European military alliance.

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