

There is no reason to doubt that this is what the Soviet leaders expect to happen, indeed believe is happening. Their justification of the current form of the policy of peaceful coexistence against its critics, notably the Chinese, lays emphasis on its militant aspects, and the execution of the policy itself, paradoxically enough at present, requires a more militant approach marginally in order to buttress the central premise that the success of Communism in the long term can come about through peaceful means.

The strategy of national liberation war is an integral part of peaceful coexistence, as the Soviet Union sees it. The success claimed for it justifies the policy whereby the Soviet Union can benefit from the advantages of a peaceful relation (more or less close - as the years since 1960 have shown) with the West, while the cause of world revolution progresses more or less by its own momentum. The parallel with Stalin's policy, whereby the prime duty of all other Communists was to contribute to the defence and development of the U.S.S.R. comes readily to mind. There is no particular reason, however, to think that the U.S.S.R. has a consistent policy toward violent revolutionary outbreaks, or necessarily has a hand in them when they occur. This is a matter of tactics. Thus the support, measured though it is, which the Soviet Government has given to North Vietnam and the NLF of South Vietnam since the end of 1964 differs from the relative indifference shown by Khrushchov before his fall, and differs again from the apparent reluctance of the Soviet Union to encourage armed insurgency in Latin America. In each case, however, confidence in Communist victory eventually underlies the approach adopted. There is no disposition to exploit crises in areas where the U.S.S.R. might become directly and dangerously involved in the consequences, no inclination to force the pace in areas where Communist influence may be expected to grow without incurring the risks of a violent upheaval.

But, whatever tactics the Soviet Union may employ in a particular situation, its present leadership asserts that "coexistence is indivisible". This slogan, used in criticism of United States Vietnam policy, is put forward as a warning that the United States cannot expect good relations with the U.S.S.R. while it is carrying on a war with another Communist country. Its meaning in fact goes beyond that. What the slogan means is precisely what it says: coexistence is not an acceptable policy for the Soviet Union if "national liberation struggles", as it understands them, cannot be carried on.

It is reasonable to ask why the U.S.S.R. should want to tie itself to revolutionary movements in various parts of the world which it cannot always control and which might embroil it in conflicts with Western countries with which it is in its own best interests to cultivate normal relations.

The general line as at present pursued by the Soviet Union, however, does give priority to the direct exercise of state power in international relations over its indirect exercise through support and manipulation of national liberation struggles. Having greater power than China, the Soviet Union is less dependent on the exploitation of such struggles to promote its objectives than is China. The constructive and skilful exercise of diplomacy at Tashkent advanced the Soviet Union's cause in a manner which does it credit.