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Or else the Alliance will rupture

Chris. Sci. Mon.
10.13.82

By Henry A. Kissinger

From recent remarks by a former US secretary of state at a conference of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

There seem to me to be two major problems that must be solved [in European-American relations].

First is the issue of military strategy. The facts are perfectly clear: The strategy developed in the early 1950s cannot possibly continue into the 1980s. Perpetuating the theory that American strategic nuclear power can protect Europe against all contingencies inevitably will lead to a combination of demoralization, pressures for unilateral disarmament, and a failure to build up conventional forces. The issue has been ducked for 15 years or hidden behind percentage figures of budgetary increase that never got to the heart of the problem of what strategy is really appropriate for the '80s and '90s.

The only possible strategy is one that builds up conventional forces to resist foreseeable challenges. There are no shortcuts, there are no gimmicks. Ideas like renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons will have the inevitable consequence of stigmatizing the weapons on which Alliance defense must still in part depend, or will create the dangerous impression that the West may accept a conventional defeat rather than in the end resort to nuclear retaliation. But the converse is not true. It is not true that we can continue to rely on essentially the strategy of the '50s and '60s, modified with a gimmick here and a new technology there. That is the fundamental problem in strategy, and it underlies the arms control policies that must be related to it.

The second problem has to do with East-West relations. We have now gone through a period of exuberant détente and then through a period in which détente was retrospectively made to carry the blame for all the difficulties that were caused by our domestic divi-

sions on other subjects. It is now time to address the fundamental question of how we should conduct East-West relations over an extended period of time.

We are at a moment when the Soviet Union is in enormous difficulty, when it is foreseeable that some time in the '80s some Soviet leaders must ask themselves how much longer they can run an economy as unbalanced as the one that they now maintain; they must ask themselves how long they can govern a system that cannot manage a legitimate succession, an economy that is assailed by shortages and surpluses at the same time — a problem that no communist country has yet solved.

At that point, a possibility for serious negotiations must arise — provided that we do not make the mere fact of negotiation an issue in our national debate, with one group considering any conference progress toward a settlement, and another group considering any meeting with Soviet negotiators as a pact with the devil. Our problem is to define what in a serious negotiation we would ask of the Soviets; what we are prepared to pay in return for what we consider restrained international conduct; and, indeed, how we define restrained international conduct on both sides.

Now that requires, however, that we husband our assets. And it implies that we have to avoid unilateral concessions, either the unilateral disarmament that so many so-called peace movements attempt to impose on us or the unilateral concessions in economic relations that in so many countries in Europe are identified with détente.

Fundamentally what the Soviets want from us in economic relations is irreplaceable for them elsewhere: food, technology, general know-how. What they pay in return — if they pay anything in return — is raw materials that are relatively easily replaceable for us. In these circumstances, trade would have long since assumed minimal proportions were it not constantly fueled by concessional prices and concessional credits. It will seem

incomprehensible to future generations that the West was not able to develop a coherent East-West economic policy and that it was not able to exact a political quid pro quo for the economic benefits it was unilaterally bestowing on the Soviet Union.

I do not think that the timing and the tactics of the American decision on the pipeline will go down in history as classic examples of modern diplomacy. I do believe, however, that the questions raised by the President's pipeline decision were important. And I cannot endorse the self-righteous confrontational reaction of so many of our allies who hide behind allegations that they were simply carrying out obligations and make debating points that since we were selling grain they had a right to sell the pipeline. Everybody knows that if we stopped selling grain tomorrow the pipeline would still go forward. The question raised by the administration was fundamental. Incidentally, I am not a wild supporter of the grain sales, either.

I do not join those who believe that an economic boycott of the Soviet Union can bring about a collapse of the Soviet system — though I would not go into mourning if it happened. I do believe that the Soviet Union understands best a negotiation on the basis of strict reciprocity. And I think it is a failure of Western leadership that we have not been able to define for ourselves what it is we want from the Soviet Union in the political field or that we have not been able to agree with each other on credit policies and pricing policies that are in the common interest. Lenin is supposed to have said 60 years ago that the day would come when the capitalists would fight with each other for the privilege of selling the rope with which to hang them. What he didn't know is that they would also offer credits to buy the rope.

The lesson to be drawn from the pipeline affair is not by what face-saving formula we can end the immediate crisis — which clearly, if rationality prevails, will be ended before

matters get totally out of control — but rather whether we can use the pipeline crisis to fashion a fundamental agreement among the industrial democracies about how they visualize East-West economic relations and for what political price. The democracies should do so in the context that they are prepared to have these economic relations with the East in support of a fundamental negotiation — a fundamental negotiation that they are also prepared to define for themselves and that is not driven by the need to placate public pressures on a year-to-year basis.

Let me make a final point about European-American relations. It is not possible, nor is it desirable, that we pursue parallel policies all over the world, but it is also not possible or compatible with the Alliance that we agree on no major policy around the world. It seems to me that we are perilously close to drifting into such a state of affairs. In Central America one can only say that several European policies are deliberately designed, or have the practical consequence, of undercutting what we are attempting to do. I am not saying that we are inevitably right, but I do maintain that when a major country acts in an area it considers of vital importance, its allies owe it some respect for its views, as we attempted to show in the Falklands crisis vis-à-vis Great Britain.

And we see it again in recent weeks with respect to the Middle East. A fundamental objective of the President's speech of Sept. 1 seems to me to have been the introduction of Jordan into the negotiations. How can that process possibly be helped when PLO leaders are feted all over Europe and their status is enhanced before anybody has seen even the slightest indication of what conclusions they have drawn from their defeat in Lebanon? Why is it so impossible for us and the Europeans at least to discuss our assumptions? How can it fail to lead to a fundamental rupture, sooner or later, if totally different strategic conceptions are simultaneously pursued?

Washington.

SOME of the difficulties that exist between Europe and the United States—it has been said at great length and repeatedly—are due to the success of previous Western policies: the recovery of Europe, the corresponding growth of a sense of identity, and the inevitable tendency that the continent which developed the concept of sovereignty was never going to find its purpose in sharing our

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burdens but in developing perceptions of its own.

However one may explain it, there seem to me to be two major problems that must be solved.

First is the issue of military strategy. Others and I have talked about this at excruciating length. The facts are perfectly clear: The strategy developed in the early 1950s cannot possibly continue into the 1980s. Perpetuating the theory that American strategic nuclear power can protect Europe against all contingencies inevitably will lead to a combination of demoralization, pressures for unilateral disarmament and a failure to build up conventional forces. The issue has been ducked for 15 years or hidden behind percentage figures of budgetary increase that never got to the heart of the problem of what strategy is really appropriate for the Eighties and Nineties.

The only possible strategy is one that builds up conventional forces to resist foreseeable challenges. There are no short-cuts, there are no gimmicks. Ideas like renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons will have the inevitable consequence of stigmatizing the weapons on which alliance defense must still in part depend, or will create the dangerous impression that the West may accept a conventional defeat rather than in the end resort to nuclear retaliation. But the converse is not true. It is not true that we can continue to rely on essentially the strategy of the Fifties and Sixties, modified with a gimmick here and a new technology there. That is the fundamental problem in strategy, and it underlies the arms control policies that must be related to it.

The second problem has to do with East-West relations. We have now gone through a period of exuberant detente and then through a period in which detente was retrospectively made to carry the blame for all the difficulties that were caused by our domestic divisions on other subjects. It is now time to deal with the fundamental question of how we should conduct East-West relations over an extended period of time.

We are at a moment when the Soviet Union is in enormous difficulty, when it is foreseeable that sometime in the Eighties some Soviet leaders must ask themselves how much longer they can run an economy as unbalanced as the one that they now maintain;

they must ask themselves how long they can govern a system that cannot manage a legitimate succession, an economy that is assailed by shortages and surpluses at the same time—a problem that no Communist country has yet solved. At that point, a possibility for serious negotiations must arise—provided that we do not make the mere fact of negotiation an issue in our national debate, with one group considering any conference progress toward a settlement, and another group considering any meeting with Soviet negotiators as a pact with the devil. Our problem is to define what in a serious negotiation we would ask of the Soviets; what we are prepared to pay in return for what we consider restrained international conduct; and, indeed, how we define restrained international conduct on both sides.

Challenges to the West

Now that requires, however, that we husband our assets. And it implies that we have to avoid unilateral concessions, either the unilateral disarmament that so many so-called peace movements attempt to impose on us or the unilateral concessions in economic relations that in so many countries in Europe are identified with detente.

Fundamentally what the Soviets want from us in economic relations is irreplaceable for them elsewhere; food, technology, general know-how. What they pay in return—if they pay anything in return—is raw materials that are relatively easily replaceable for us. In these circumstances, trade would have long since assumed minimal proportions were it not constantly fueled by concessional prices and concessional credits. It will seem incomprehensible to future generations that the West was not able to develop a coherent East-West economic policy and that it was not able to exact a political *quid pro quo* for the economic benefits it was unilaterally bestowing on the Soviet Union.

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