

An Earlier End to the Cold War?

Zbigniew Brzezinski, who was President Carter's national security adviser and is now a professor at Johns Hopkins, considers in *Foreign Affairs* (Fall 1992) the possibility that the Cold War could have been brought to an earlier conclusion.

The West perhaps might have won sooner, but at a higher cost and with a greater risk of war. The key opportunity for the West came in . . . 1953-56. Greater Western elasticity in 1953 might have facilitated a Soviet pullback from Germany. But the Kremlin almost certainly would have used the Soviet army to maintain its grip on Warsaw and Prague, while in the West the neutralization of Germany might have precluded the establishment of binding NATO links between America and Europe. In contrast greater Western toughness in 1956—still a time of decisive U.S. strategic superiority—might have resulted in forcing the Soviet Union out of Hungary and Poland. The communist regimes in these countries were crumbling, and the Soviet leadership itself was in a state of panic.

The Cold War, however, would not have ended. Communism was not ripe for a collapse within Russia itself, and on the global scale the ideological momentum of communism was far from spent. Communist movements were strong even in Western Europe, and the communist wave in the Far East was still cresting . . .

The only other opportunity for ending the Cold War may have existed in the early 1970s, on the basis of what might be called "the Peace of Westphalia formula" [in which each side would have retained its geopolitical and ideological realms]. But both sides would have had then to accept the status quo in Europe as fixed. The West seemed ready to do so. However, by the mid-1970s, the Soviets saw themselves as being on a historical roll . . . In effect any acceptance of the European status quo would have been for the Soviets merely a temporary expedient . . .

[The] Kremlin was in no mood to be propitiated either through arms control or an acceptance by the West of the existing division of Europe. The Cold War eventually ended because the West succeeded in combining firm containment with an active offensive on human rights and a strategic buildup of its own, while aiding the resistance in Afghanistan and Poland.

A more plausible case can be made for the proposition that the West could have spared itself a decade or so by adopting earlier an offensive ideological and strategic posture. But in real life democracies are not able to adopt a forward strategy that requires philosophical and military mobilization without overwhelming and truly threatening provocation from the other side. That provocation was apparent to some in the 1970s; to most Americans and Europeans it became evident only in the early 1980s.

"quick fixes" of the friendly-fire problem were tried, including marking vehicles with luminous paint and thermal tape and using small infrared beacons on combat vehicles. The army seems to favor a technological solution and has promised to spend \$5-10 million on research this year. But human error is almost always behind friendly-fire incidents, Shrader writes. A

greater emphasis on "training, combat conditioning, fire discipline, planning and coordination of operations, and keeping the troops informed" would make more sense.

No matter what is done, Shrader believes, friendly-fire incidents will remain, as Major General Matthew B. Ridgway once said, "part of the inevitable price of war in human life."

Ethnic Nations

"Reflections: The Absence of Empire" by William Pfaff, in *The New Yorker* (Aug. 10, 1992), 20 West 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

The brutal Serbian exercise in "ethnic cleansing" in what was Yugoslavia is only the most extreme manifestation of the ethnic conflicts that have broken out throughout Eastern Eu-

rope and the former Soviet Union since the collapse of communism. At the root of these conflicts, historian-journalist Pfaff argues, is a concept of nationality radically different from

the Western one.

In the United States especially, but also in Britain, France, and other Western nations, ethnicity has had little to do with nationality. Minorities are not excluded by definition from the Western nation. But in eastern-central and Balkan Europe, Pfaff observes, nationality is based on ethnic or religious background; it cannot be acquired by immigrants or other "outsiders." People who belong to "other" ethnic groups cannot be deemed fully equal. Since "the frontiers between national groups are often indistinct or arbitrary, with groups of different ethnic nationality intermingled," the result has been discrimination against minorities inside national borders and disputes over claims to ethnic enclaves outside them. The tragic conflicts among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia illustrate this, as do, among other examples, the struggles involving ethnic Russian minorities in Moldova, the Baltic states, and other regions of the former Soviet Union.

The new nation-states of Eastern and Balkan Europe, Pfaff writes, say they want to become part of the West and "claim a right to self-

determination . . . but none are ethnically integral, and most have yet to demonstrate their ability to live by a secular political standard, juridically indifferent to the ethnic and religious identities of individual citizens."

Since the breakup in 1918 of the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires, which had accommodated the ethnic diversity of these societies in "essentially corporate or feudal political structures," these ethnic nations "have found no lasting solution to their difficulties, which are great. Together with Central Europe's Jews and the peoples of the Soviet Union, they bore the most ferocious consequences of the two 20th-century totalitarianisms—an ordeal from which they are only now emerging."

Despite today's ethnic wars, Pfaff is somewhat optimistic that the worst can be avoided. The situation, he says, is not like that of either 1914 or 1938: "There is a fundamental interest now among all the neighboring states and the democracies as a whole to head off ethnic conflict and ethnic war—to stop it, penalize it, force the parties to negotiate. This failed in the case of Yugoslavia, but the failure itself has been a lesson."

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Industrial Policy À La Carte

"U.S. Industrial Policy: Inevitable and Ineffective" by Kevin P. Phillips, in *Harvard Business Review* (July-Aug. 1992), Boston, Mass. 02163.

Whether the next president is Bill Clinton or George Bush, America—after more than a decade of heated debate on the subject—is finally going to get some sort of national industrial policy. So predicts Kevin Phillips, the political analyst who in 1969 correctly foresaw *The Emerging Republican Majority*. The trouble, he says, is that the industrial policy that is soon to emerge from the political kitchens is bound to be either "half-baked" or "overdone."

Throughout the 1980s, liberals and conservatives debated the merits of a government-led industrial policy. Phillips himself weighed in with a 1984 tome urging conservatives to start shaping a program for business-government collaboration. Nothing came of such proposals in the Reagan era. Now, however, with anxiety about the nation's economy on the rise, an "inevitable" liberal counterreaction is setting in, Phillips says. Already, he notes, the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 has

forced the Bush administration "to begin evolving a national trade strategy."

Pressure for a national industrial policy, Phillips argues, is now coming not only from organized labor but from business. And not just from executives in declining industries, but from those in "high-tech companies struggling with global competition, advanced aerospace companies facing the disruptions of lost defense contracts and military spending cuts, and even global service industries confronting national barriers to free trade." Corporate chieftains such as Motorola CEO George Fisher, says Phillips, increasingly see a need to counter foreign business-government alliances with a similar alliance in the United States.

Ideally, Phillips observes, the coming national industrial policy would combine the Republicans' respect for the workings of the market with the Democrats' appreciation of the strategic role government can play in fostering