

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

The Kremlin, Pipes argues, views nuclear war not only as possible but also as possible to win. Twenty million dead in World War II alone (U.S. dead in all wars since 1775 are estimated at one million) and a political system based on struggle have inured Moscow to the threat of heavy losses. Russian strategy, keyed to the politically powerful Red Army and formulated by the military, grafts nuclear weaponry onto an overall offensive and defensive plan that avoids sole reliance on any "absolute weapon." A sophisticated civil defense program has been designed to safeguard political and military leaders, industrial managers, and skilled workers in the event of war.

"There is something innately destabilizing in the very fact that we consider nuclear war unfeasible and suicidal for both," writes Pipes, "and our chief adversary views it as feasible and winnable for himself." In the SALT negotiations, he warns, the key question is *intent*: The success of deterrence is possible only if the United States understands "Soviet war-winning strategy."

Li Hung-Chang's Sleight of Hand

"Li Hung-Chang's Mission to America, 1896" by Gerald G. Eggert, in *The Midwest Quarterly* (Spring 1977), Kansas State College, Pittsburg, Kans. 66762.

The tour of Western Europe and the United States in 1896 by Li Hung-Chang, "stern-and-resolute Earl of the first rank" and the most senior Imperial Chinese official ever to visit the West, was interpreted by his hosts as a signal that Peking, stung by the recent Sino-Japanese War, was eager to make political and commercial deals to protect and modernize its faltering empire.

While Li's visit differs significantly from recent U.S.-Chinese contacts, writes Eggert, a historian at Pennsylvania State University, it showed "how far fancy can be, and has been, divorced from reality in East-West contacts."

After representing his Emperor at Tsar Nicholas II's coronation in St. Petersburg, Li undertook an extended trip through Europe and the United States. Despite a series of high-level receptions designed to win his favor, no deals were made. American historians have argued nonetheless that Li's visit altered the Cleveland administration's commercial policy toward China and kindled interest in the China trade.

Actually, Eggert writes, the significance of Li's eight-month tour lies in the treaty he first concluded with the Russians, giving them right of way across Manchuria for the Trans-Siberian Railway in return for a mutual defense pact against Japan. Li's subsequent tour of the West, Eggert speculates, was undertaken simply to maintain the diplomatic balance. Peking wished neither to alienate the Western powers (especially its old ally, England) nor to create an image of Chinese dependence on the Russians.