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**FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE**


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sor, but by ensuring that neither side could win. The chief goal of U.S. policy-makers became avoiding any move that might disturb the nuclear "balance of terror."

Moreover, the "ideology of arms control" was soon extended to conventional warfare, Coats says. To win the land war in Indochina, for example, would have invited Soviet or Chinese intervention, it was thought; field commanders were ordered instead to kill as many of the enemy as possible in South Vietnam to bring Hanoi to the bargaining table. Similarly, NATO plans for the conventional defense of Western Europe promise nothing more than a holding action. Reducing U.S. strategy to staging a contest in attrition, says Coats, debases the military profession and weakens the public's political resolve.

The arms-control mentality also influences U.S. strategic policies. Washington abandoned the B-1 bomber and scrapped antiballistic defenses during the 1970s in the belief that Moscow would find them provocative. Civil defense has never been seriously pursued, Coats says, because of the belief that "the ability to defend your population against nuclear attack is itself destabilizing." Out of the same fear, U.S. diplomats feel compelled not to leave the East-West negotiating table without achieving agreement, even on highly unfavorable terms. Unfortunately, Coats observes, the Soviets do not feel such pressures.

It is not victory itself, but the idea of long-term victory that is important, he says. Washington committed the United States to the Vietnam War, viewing the conflict as a technical exercise. Applying such an abstract calculus to the superpower confrontation and ignoring the human desire for loftier purposes, Coats warns, will erode the nation's will to persevere in its own defense. The eventual result: greater East-West instability or complete U.S. surrender.

"A technical solution to avoid war," he concludes, "can never replace a political solution to achieve peace."

### *Leaders Without Followers*

"Mass and Elite Foreign Policy Opinions"  
by Robert W. Oldendick and Barbara Ann Bardes, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Fall 1982), Elsevier Science Publishing Co., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Since the Vietnam War, America's Cold War consensus on foreign policy has dissolved. Not only is the public divided, but a substantial gap has opened between the views of ordinary folk and those of America's opinion leaders—politicians, scholars, journalists.

The two groups are not divided on every issue, note Oldendick and Bardes, political scientists at the University of Cincinnati and Loyola University, respectively. Public opinion surveys conducted in 1974 and 1978 by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations showed that the public and its leaders generally shared an "internationalist" orientation, favoring an active U.S. role in world affairs.

On military issues, however, the two groups parted company fre-

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quently. Both groups agreed by wide margins on the importance of the U.S. commitment to NATO and on the need at times to support foreign dictators. But "influentials" were twice as likely to support U.S. arms sales abroad; 64 percent of the public favored strong U.S. efforts to contain communism, while only 45 percent of the leaders did.

The authors also found the public more "chauvinistic" than its leaders. More than 88 percent of the public but only 26 percent of the leadership group believed America's "real concerns" lay at home. (Ironically, however, the public was twice as likely to favor strengthening international organizations such as the United Nations.) And while both groups heavily favored East-West détente, they differed on particular issues: Eighty-one percent of the leaders but only 46 percent of the public opposed restrictions on trade with Moscow.

"Opinion leaders," the authors conclude, do not appear to guide the public on foreign policy issues at all. And neither group responds to presidential leadership: Even as President Jimmy Carter stressed human rights and worldwide arms reductions after his election in 1976, both the public and elites turned more hawkish between 1974 and 1978. Support for human rights remained high but virtually unchanged.

The days of easy consensus on foreign policy are gone forever, the authors conclude. Any policy that comes from the White House is bound to find many vocal opponents.

*High-Tech Warfare*

"The Changing Face of Nonnuclear War" by Neville Brown, in *Survival* (Sept.-Oct. 1982), International Institute for Strategic Studies, 23 Tavistock St., London, WC2E 7NQ, United Kingdom.

Debates over the conventional defense of Europe evoke images of a World War II revival. Actually, nonnuclear war today would be far more destructive than anything seen before.

Brown, who teaches international security affairs at Britain's University of Birmingham, notes that technological advances, chiefly in computers, have revolutionized conventional firepower. While an American tank in 1945 had to fire its main gun 12 times to stand a 50 percent chance of hitting a moving target 2,000 meters away, today's precision guidance systems offer a similar chance with the first shot. Highly accurate air-to-ground missiles developed since the Vietnam War have cut the weight of explosives needed to destroy targets by 95 percent, vastly increasing the effectiveness of fighter-bombers.

Such improvements are the product of a tripling of computer efficiency between 1965 and 1980; by 1990, performance may increase by another 30 times over 1980 levels.

Brown worries that defense planners, while aware of such changes, have not grasped their significance. Knowing the technical capabilities of the machine gun before 1914 did not stop World War I military commanders from launching ill-fated mass assaults, he notes.