

Sooner or later the status quo
in Europe must and will be changed

What Kind of Europe?

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Since the world is again in dramatic search of a new equilibrium, it is not surprising that the future of Europe is a major subject of debate among those concerned about international affairs. Many of the present terms of the discussion were set at the end of World War II—in February, 1945, to be more precise, at Yalta. A careful reading of the Yalta Papers leaves doubt that the three men who sat around the conference table understood clearly the ramifications of the new order they were establishing. Convinced as they were that their solutions were of a temporary nature, they devoted most of their time to jockeying for short-range advantages. In the background, however, were greater historic forces of which these men were the puppets. Yalta, of course, established new borders in Europe which were to last through the period we were later to name the “cold war.” More important than the drawing of borderlines, however, was Yalta’s creation of a novel basic equilibrium in the world.

Although there were three men in the Crimea, they were by no means equals. Roosevelt spoke for America and Stalin for the Soviet Union. It is more difficult to say whom Churchill spoke for. Certainly he was not invited as the representative of Europe, nor as leader of the British Commonwealth. His role at Yalta must rather be attributed to his being the great historic figure of the war and not to the importance of any home base he represented. His voice, therefore, carried relatively little weight, and, indeed, on most issues he was overruled by his American and Russian counterparts. Thus, already at Yalta a new bipolar world had emerged.

This bipolarity of world powers soon became evident to everyone and led unavoidably to the conflict called the cold war. Objective observers of his-

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tory tend to agree that had it not been for the awesome prospect of nuclear conflict, we would have been in a shooting war during the Berlin crises at the latest. Paradoxical as it may sound, the escalation of armament prevented the powers from using the arsenal available to them. While battling one another politically, economically and psychologically, they were restrained militarily.

It is too early to say who really won the confrontation, though one suspects that it is not the Soviet Union. Russia probably wasted twenty crucial years of its history, during which it might have been developing Siberia, for example, instead of expending its energies in a policy of suppressing 110 million Europeans who lived in the areas it received under the Yalta agreement. By the time the Soviet Union realized its error, it was too late. The Sino-Soviet conflict was already under way, preventing the populating of Siberia in the orderly manner that might have tied it once and for all to the European part of Russia.

With the 1960’s the bipolar world of Yalta began to disintegrate. This was not so much a result of political changes—as some have erroneously assumed—but of the development of modern armaments and their impact on the strategic balance of forces. The weapons of mass destruction and, even more, their carriers completely changed the face of the world.

In the past, both the United States and the Soviet Union could count upon space as their major ally. In the great wars against Charles XII, Napoleon and Hitler, the Russians always began with a major withdrawal. They literally trapped the enemy in the unlimited distances of Russia and then, once the climate and logistic difficulties had sapped his strength, crushed him. America enjoyed the advantage of having no serious enemy in its hemisphere, protected as it was from foreign attack by the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans. The USA was able, therefore, to intervene in world affairs without fear of reprisals. While

waging two world wars with expeditionary forces, America enjoyed complete security for its industry and economy. In a very real sense America simply could not be defeated: For both the Soviet Union and America the advantage of space was eliminated by intercontinental ballistic missiles.

The French thinker, General Pierre Gallois, has noted the parallel between what happened in the last decade and developments in the earlier part of the nineteenth century in the American Far West. In frontier days the physically strongest man could master the settlement. Then the pistol appeared. It was correctly called "the great equalizer," since it reestablished the balance of power in favor of the physically weak.

The comparison is apt for understanding relations between nations today. The weapons of mass destruction give the smaller states a great increment in their potential strength, as witness developments in France and China. The same weapons deprived the two superpowers of their decisive advantage. This will be even more the case as the weapons of mass destruction proliferate. We should have no illusions on this score. True, the two former superpowers still try to retain their predominance by imposing on others the so-called Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but it is already clear that in the light simply of technical developments such weapons will escape all controls and will become increasingly accessible to virtually all, even the only half-industrialized, countries of the world. This fact of international life has decisive influence on many of our traditional political concepts, which must now be abandoned.

Consider, for instance, the old notion of military alliances. The Warsaw Pact and NATO, whatever their past political merits, now have a rapidly declining military significance, which may indeed already have disappeared.

In the past major powers could sign plausible alliances with smaller countries. The risks they incurred were strictly limited. If they fulfilled their obligations and were subsequently defeated, they might lose an army, a province, a colony or a dynasty; but they would not risk the very existence of the nation itself. With weapons of global destruction, however, such risks are unlimited. Any nuclear nation entering a conflict with another nuclear nation knows that it could be completely wiped out. The danger is further increased by the fact that the weakest nuclear device has less explosive force than the strongest conventional weapon. Thus there is today an uninterrupted continuity from the rifle to the largest hydrogen bomb.

Faced with this prohibitive risk, a major power will accept the ultimate challenge only for reasons of vital national interest and never for marginal advantage. In other words, in a time when the decisive weapons of war are deeply buried in the domestic

soil or under the surface of the seas in submarines, America and the Soviet Union would use them only in the event of a direct threat to their own territory. All the other countries, whether they belong to the Warsaw Pact or NATO, must be considered marginal and thus are not a *casus belli* for the dominant nuclear powers.

By the same token, bases have also lost most of their significance. When weapons still had to be carried by aircraft, each side needed advance bases in order to reach the enemy. Now both the Soviet Union and the United States (and very soon other powers) can, with intercontinental ballistic missiles, attack almost every area on the globe.

These developments put an end to the bipolar world of Yalta. The two winners at the conference table in the Crimea built themselves the weapons with which to destroy their supremacy. They did so, curiously enough, through programs aimed specifically at surpassing each other once and for all. Thus is revealed anew the old truth that exaggerated power is self-destructive.

The international reality with which we must now deal has emerged from the events of the 1960's. At that time they talked in the Communist world about polycentrism. The same now applies to the world at large. The important question coming out of the 1960's was which of the two former superpowers would first recognize the new reality.

It is a credit to the United States that Washington first perceived the basic shift in international power relationships. This American success may be attributed in part to the structure of the Soviet Union. In the past Russia benefited from its great stability compared to the rest of the world. This led in turn to the undeniable superiority of Soviet diplomacy. Now, in a suddenly shattered equilibrium, the virtue of yesterday proves to be today's handicap. Even on the individual level, the Soviet leaders are on the average ten to fifteen years older than their Western counterparts and thus somewhat lacking the flexibility essential in a time of great changes. In addition, in the Soviet Union, more than in other countries, military leaders have a decisive influence on political planning. The Red Army in Russia means primarily two names—Marshals Gretchko and Jakubowski—both of whom were already famous by the end of World War II. Now it is a truism that generals who have won a battle and thereafter lived in peace for some years are prone to take up the next conflict precisely where they left off. This was the reason for France's undoing in 1940. The same applies today to the Soviet Union. Thus the Red Army, technically among the most modern of military machines, is headed by people who in their strategic ideas are a quarter century behind their times. Here too the parallel with the France of 1940 is striking. The French forces had

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more armored cars than did the Germans, but the heroes of the infantry battles of Verdun and Artois, the Gamelins, Georges and Weygands, did not know how to use them.

The end of the Yalta era was manifest for all to see in President Nixon's announcement of his China visit on July 15, 1971. Washington's recognition that there was another state that must be taken into account was, in effect, admission that the era of the two superpowers was over. The statements by President Nixon and Henry Kissinger in connection with the China trip showed that the responsible American leaders are fully aware of all the implications of the new situation. Understanding the proliferation of power, their long-range planning now takes into account the triangular world of 1971.

The whole globe is involved in these changes. Looking at a map of the world in polar perspective we can already see the new order emerging in the Northern Hemisphere. There are three major powers, each with their dependent states: the USA, the Soviet Union and China. There is yet another emerging power with increasing force of attraction upon its neighbors: Japan. Then there is what remains of the European continent. Western Europe has achieved a remarkable measure of economic integration but has made little progress toward political unification. Thus Europe appears as one of the most directly affected areas in the movement toward a new balance of power.

Europe, it must be remembered, suffered most from the consequences of the Yalta agreement. It was literally cut in two along borders which can by no stretch of the imagination be called natural. Historical experience and geography make it clear that the Yalta system will have to be changed sooner or later. The line will move East or it will move West, but it will move. Except for small and local rectifications, if the Yalta lines have not been moved so far it is because of the unnatural power-political rigor mortis imposed by the cold war. There is no doubt that the changed equilibrium described above and, most particularly, the resurgence of China as a power vitally interested in European affairs will directly affect the Old World. All this could, of course, lead to healthy adjustment, but it also entails major risks, as witness what may happen at any time in Yugoslavia.

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isphere. It is the only area of the industrialized world where small states of the nineteenth century survive contrary to national and international logic. Technical developments have made the forms of past generations redundant. History shows that geographical units are over a long period of time reflective of the fastest means of transportation. When traffic moved on foot, people could easily live in city republics. The horse and sailboat demanded larger units; and the railroads created the national states of the nineteenth century. Now jet aircraft demands units of continental scale. In this perspective, the present states of Europe simply do not make the grade.

The twentieth century has shown that major conflicts regularly originate in areas where a large political and economic community was destroyed and replaced by small states unfit to live. This was the case of the Balkans at the outset of the First World War. There the countries that had emerged from the unwise destruction of the Turkish empire literally dragged the major powers into fratricidal conflict. The Second World War resulted from the atomization of the Danube Valley. The rule is that low-pressure areas attract the storms.

Viewing the Northern Hemisphere in this light, we realize that the political divisions of Western Europe may well be the main source of future dangers. It is therefore in the interest of everyone that the European void be filled, either by Europe's uniting and thus becoming a power similar to the other continents or by an outside force taking over the area. Sooner or later the status quo in Europe must and will be changed.

There is already considerable discussion about a changing Europe beyond the extension of the Common Market, currency problems and preparations for the Soviet-sponsored so-called European Security Conference. The debates have extended to the issue of what a future Europe should be like. It would have been better had this larger discussion been set aside until Europe had achieved further economic and especially political integration. It seems premature, for example, to talk of programs and policies before some kind of European Secretariat has been organized to coordinate them. On the desirability of such a Secretariat there are no fundamental differences among those of varying political tendencies. The Secretariat might have been appointed by the national governments, which means

in practice that Gaullists, Socialists, Conservatives and Christian Democrats would all have been represented. Unfortunately, even before this first step has been realized, some interested forces have suddenly taken an untimely initiative.

The main actor here is Mr. Sicco Mansholt, the president of the Commission of the European Community. The irrepressibly outspoken Mr. Mansholt has taken an initiative which is quite uncalled for on the part of a European official who, by his very function, ought to have remained above party politics.

Having reached, by an unfortunate accident, the highest post of the European hierarchy and knowing full well that he will not be reappointed on December 31, Mansholt has presumed to put himself forward as the leader of a European Socialist movement. Having further failed to be elected president of the Socialist International, his ambition is obviously to create a European Socialist Party that aims to seize power in the European communities and to transform these communities in an ideological direction of his own that has little in common with the goals of Social Democracy in Europe.

His initiative has launched a Europe-wide discussion as to the future direction of the several communities. This discussion compels other persons, who, in the interest of the continent, had tried to postpone the question until a more opportune time, to come out into the open lest Mansholt impose his proposals for lack of an energetic opposition. There is no doubt that we are on the eve of a truly great debate, which, while untimely, will certainly be interesting.

The Mansholt initiative has cleverly seized on one of the burning issues of the times, namely, the environment. This issue not only has public appeal but also has the advantage of being able to appeal to "necessary sacrifices" while being very vague about who is to sacrifice what. Politicians have long known that appeals to sacrifice are readily applauded, since each listener assumes that the sacrifice is obviously to be required of his neighbor. Furthermore, hard information about pollution and environmental problems being far from adequate, any political quack can say whatever he wants without risking exposure. Then, too, the environmental problem can be used for the projection of highly ideological planning because it is so very vague and new. Especially among groups of the bourgeois left, it lends itself to high-sounding criticism of the free enterprise system. This is made the easier by the unlimited access to data of free economy countries. Such data is, of course, essential to the indictment of the system. Totalitarian countries, on the other hand, can more conveniently keep unpleasant facts from the public and thus escape the indictment. One thinks, for example, of the Soviet Union, which, according to qualified observers, has the worst environmental and pollution prob-

lems but refuses to disclose the facts. Thus a distorted picture emerges, one which favors the foes of the market economy. People are persuaded to believe that pollution is a consequence of the profit motive, whereas in fact it results from industrial development regardless of the system within which such development takes place.

Mansholt began his initiative in 1971 by issuing an alarm about the measures necessary to save us from the dire consequences of pollution and population explosion. He was obviously inspired by advance information about the report of the Club of Rome, which has since been issued in book form as *The Limits to Growth*. It is perhaps pertinent to note that the alarm, which demanded measures of greatest austerity, was dated from Mansholt's palatial vacation home in Sardinia. One imagines an appeal for fasting issued from Antoine's or the Café de Paris, or, perhaps, Saint Francis preaching from his suite at the Ritz.

It becomes increasingly important to make a clear distinction between the traditional Socialists rooted in our trade unions and what is now the growing circle of drawing-room, idle-rich socialism. The latter is mainly the intellectual sport of the sons and daughters of the rich, expressing a death wish that is not uncommon among those who know neither the satisfaction nor the struggle of earning their livelihood.

Mansholt uses the issues of environmental deterioration and the population explosion to demand a complete rethinking of European policies. All the woes of our days, we are told, result from the market economy and its profit motive. Henceforth, by this reasoning, we must create a society in which both are banned and in which the public sector, guided by a benevolent and wise bureaucracy, leads the people to their spiritual happiness. In subsequent declarations Mansholt has gone further. His main argument for a completely socialist society is that taxes can no longer be increased while demands of the public sector still grow by leaps and bounds. Thus the private sector must be taken over in order to raise public income. That such an approach is not logical or reasonable does not seem to occur to its advocates. What they are saying is that, since income is not enough, we should now start spending the capital. They obviously forget the nonproductivity of the public sector. Nonetheless, these arguments look good to the uninformed and thereby furnish a broad platform for public appeal. It is conveniently forgotten that the greatest profit element is increases in wages and salaries. The people are not told that if plans such as Mansholt's are carried out, the gravy train is not going to stop only for the capitalists but as surely for the members of the labor unions.

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