

Missing Page

Novels, stories, and poems make for good history, but they read even better as literature.

Finally, the one period that Spence slights somewhat is the thirty-one-year period (up to 1980) of the People's Republic, to which no more than fifty pages of text are devoted. This section of the book lacks the focus and insight of the earlier sections, perhaps because it is too recent and because there is a paucity of authoritative studies. To Spence's credit, he takes an independent stance—which is decidedly humanist; and although the final pages are somewhat sketchy, the book ends appropriately, not on a discussion of the achievements of the Four Modernizations, but on the democracy movement—China's "revolution" of the 1980s. [WV]

THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF ARMS SALES

by **Andrew J. Pierre**

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Nightly television news programs dramatize the absurdity of modern arms sales with clips of American-made planes flown by Argentine pilots bombing the ships of our ally Great Britain. Then there are the American M-60 tanks, sold to Iran and captured by Iraq, that are being shipped to Jordan at the same moment the Congress and White House are debating the issue of stepping up arms sales to King Hussein. And in the aftermath of the normalization of relations between the People's Republic of China and the United States, Chinese soldiers were killed in Kampuchea with American weapons captured by the Vietnamese in the Vietnam war. The story repeats itself almost everywhere on the globe.

It may be that the most one can do with this problem is to collect information, marshal the facts, and prepare statesmen to live with the consequences. Andrew J. Pierre, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, has toured the world. With assistance from a long list of foundations he has visited an even longer list of institutes of foreign and regional affairs and strategic and peace studies. If shuttle research and the beneficence of

foundations and research centers can solve a problem, Mr. Pierre should be close to his goal—provided he has had time to think.

What *are* the lessons and conclusions derived from this global survey? First, a nation's arms sales must be seen in terms of its attempt to gain political leverage with other nations. Yet the two largest recipients of Soviet and American arms, Egypt and Iran, did not hesitate to turn away from their suppliers. Second, total world military expenditures grew from \$100 billion to \$500 billion between 1960 and 1980. Military expenditures in the Third World have increased fourfold since 1960, whereas those in the developed countries have increased 48 per cent. Third, "arms sales are fraught with policy dilemmas. There are no easy answers...no 'simple truths.'" Arms transfers worldwide grew from \$9.4 billion in 1960 to \$19.1 billion in 1978 and will likely have increased to \$21 billion or more (the Center for Defense Information reports \$30 billion) in the early 1980s. During a twenty-year period the United States has been the largest supplier of conventional arms and has registered the greatest increase in sales. Fourth, decision-makers find it difficult to judge whether an arms transfer is good or bad. They must weigh influence and leverage, competing foreign policy aims, economic benefits, security and stability, standardization of arms, and possible diversions from economic development of the recipient country.

All these comments and conclusions are thoughtful, sensible, and moderate. So is the discussion in parts two and three, where Pierre considers the performance of the United States, the Soviet Union, France, the United Kingdom, and others as "suppliers" and the countries of the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, and sub-Saharan Africa as "recipients."

What remain are thirty-six pages devoted to "restraints" or approaches to managing the problem. Six of these pages explain why arms transfers will increase in the future. Measured against the problem and the dilemmas described, Pierre's proposals are modest and offered without much confidence. They are, in summary: (1) The arms registry approach. This follows the precedent of the League of Nations from 1925-38 and a succession of proposals before the United Nations, none of

which, however, has been accepted because each rests on the false "assumption that arms sales are bad in themselves." (2) Placing the burden of responsibility for restraints on the recipients. This approach, Pierre finds, "is almost guaranteed to lead to no progress" because recipients are members of regional groupings that "remain...inchoate and ill-defined" and because mutual support for restraint from suppliers is needed as well. (3) Various forms of multilateral regulation: mutual example, formal agreement, and information negotiation. (4) Seeking prior arrangements for restraint between the United States and the West Europeans before efforts at Soviet-American accords are undertaken. This omission was an error of the Carter administration, Pierre notes. The failure of the Carter approach to the Soviets on Conventional Arms Transfers (CAT) was due to a savage bureaucratic struggle in which Brzezinski triumphed over Gelb. In fact, it provides more lessons about the prospects for restraints than do all of Andrew Pierre's proposals together. (5) A search for East-West "rules of the game," especially in the Third World. Having reviewed the alternatives, Pierre concludes: "Arms sales have become the common coin of contemporary diplomacy, and their role in world politics will become increasingly salient." Pierre's fatalism and pessimism may be borne out, but if they are, the chances of averting conflict are dim. Curiously, his account of CAT suggests that, had personalities not interfered, a Soviet-American accord was close to realization in the Carter years.

Are there not more basic questions that Pierre never addresses but might fruitfully be explored? Looking back, how valid is the Nixon (Guam) Doctrine that affirms that the United States, in committing itself to help those who can defend themselves, will do so only by transfer of arms, excluding any "on the ground" evidence of commitment such as an American presence? Looking ahead, if arms sales are basically a political problem, as Pierre seems to argue, what are the prospects for a relaxation of tensions based on political negotiations as distinct from technical arms negotiations? Is it another U.S. error to fall back on the answers to technical problems provided by multilateral institutions when underlying political problems remain? The issues, finally, are too serious for us to