

Khrushchev Outflanked

Khrushchev's fall has been explained as a result of his permitting the rift with China to become unbridgeable. The fact however, which is hardly mentioned in the press comments, is that Khrushchev's failure can be understood only if we consider his total political strategy and our part in contributing to his failure.

His aim was an accommodation with the United States, thus securing his Western flank while facing a hostile China. At a time when the Soviet Union had become the second greatest industrial power and thus one of the greatest "have" states, it felt threatened by China as the leader of the "have not" states' revolution. Khrushchev was afraid of the spread of nuclear weapons, especially among his two most dangerous opponents—China and West Germany. There are good reasons to assume that his concept of an accommodation with the United States included the aim to prevent (perhaps through the United Nations) the Chinese and West Germans from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Considering the military and industrial inferiority of China and even West Germany in comparison with a United States-Soviet bloc, this aim could have been achieved before China and West Germany would have an effective nuclear arsenal; while at the same time both the United States and the Soviet Union could disarm drastically.

Khrushchev did his best to

achieve this aim. He stopped technical aid for the Chinese nuclear development. He made the important concession to the United States of dropping his demand for a peace treaty with East Germany and political neutralization of West Berlin.

But when we had gotten this concession we went ahead to threaten him in a more vital area: the multilateral force which is likely to give West Germany a *de facto* possession of nuclear weapons, a Germany which has not relinquished its claims to the pre-war boundaries in the east. Thus Khrushchev's policy has led to a situation where the Soviet Union is threatened on both flanks—a political failure which would remove any leading statesman from his position in any country.

We do not know yet whether the new leaders will try to continue Khrushchev's policy of accommodation with the West, but one thing seems likely; if the United States goes on with its plans for the MLF, the new leaders will be forced to seek an accommodation with China, and to follow an aggressive policy, or they will be replaced by a still tougher group. The next months may offer us the last opportunity of avoiding this by not going ahead with the MLF. Khrushchev's fall should be a lesson showing where further "victories" in the cold war will lead to.

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