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EUROPE, NATO AND THE DETENTE

In his syndicated newspaper column for March 10, Walter Lippmann referred to the primary election contest in New Hampshire. "The outstanding fact about the New Hampshire primary," he said, "is that no one of the candidates, declared or undeclared, has thought it necessary to make even one considered speech addressed to an adult and informed audience.... It is no exaggeration," Lippmann concluded, "to say that the intellectual and moral level of this primary campaign reflects the degradation of the democratic process."

I have not followed the New Hampshire primary closely, but Lippmann's analysis does not surprise me. The degradation of the public dialogue is not confined to that state, and I doubt very much if during this election year we will hear many speeches that are not insulting to the intelligence of thoughtful men. This will be especially true in the field of foreign affairs. The Republicans will revive the theme that the administration is soft on Communism, that it is allowing the United States to be pushed around in Latin America and Southeast Asia, and that the way to solve all problems of foreign policy is by means of increased military strength and the announced willingness to use it. Vietnam will be a focal point, and one of the key questions for the year is whether President Johnson will feel obliged to enlarge the war in South Vietnam in order to prove his loyalty and his toughness. If he does take such a step, it will likely be in late summer. The months of August, September and October will be critical, just as they were in the last election year, 1962, the year of the Cuban crisis.

This will be a very crucial period in international politics. Because of the American elections, it is not likely to be a year in which further progress is made to ease international tensions or to solve the disputes that exist between the Communist bloc nations and the Western democracies. The best that we can hope for, is a maintenance of the status quo. The greatest danger is the possibility of a complete reversal of the detente and a major acceleration of the arms race and the cold war. I suspect that a real fear of this danger is what has prompted the Warsaw Pact Nations, since the assassination of President Kennedy, to launch the most intensive series of peace overtures in their history.

The first major element in this campaign was the message sent by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to the governments of all states. The focus of this diplomatic note was a proposal for the renunciation of the use of force for settling territorial and frontier disputes. It is a long and interesting document which makes specific reference to territorial conflicts that exist in many parts of the world. It calls for an agreement which would include, and I quote:

"A solemn undertaking by the states parties to the agreement not to resort to force to alter the existing state frontiers;

"Recognition that the territory of states should not, even temporarily, be the object of any invasion, attack, military occupation or any other forcible measures directly or indirectly undertaken by other states for whatsoever political, economic,

strategic, frontier, or any other consideration..."

I continue to quote from Premier Khrushchov's message. It calls for "A firm declaration that neither differences in social or political systems nor denial of recognition or the absence of diplomatic relations, nor any other pretexts can serve as justification for the violation of one state of the territorial integrity of another." The Khrushchov message also calls for the solution of territorial disputes by negotiations, mediation, conciliatory procedure, and other means in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

This proposal by Premier Khrushchov is not greatly different from his previous requests for a non-aggression pact. The main difference is the focus on the question of boundary and territorial disputes.

The second salient in the new Soviet peace campaign was the document tabled by the Soviet negotiators at Geneva on January 28. It also called for a non-aggression pact, but added proposals for the withdrawal of troops from foreign territories, reduction of the numerical strength of armed forces, reduced military budgets, atom free zones, the prevention of the dissemination of nuclear weapons, measures to safeguard against surprise attack, the destruction of manned bombers, and the banning of underground nuclear tests. Most of these ideas were not new.

The third major element in the peace campaign of the Warsaw pact nations was the unveiling on March 5 by Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki, of a new version of his plan for a nuclear free zone in Central Europe. Rapacki originally put forward this idea in October of 1957. It received friendly responses at that time from a few Westerners like the late Hugh Gaitskell and former U S Ambassador to Yugoslavia, George F. Kennan. But the Western governments in general did not respond favorably. The 1957 proposal called for a zone consisting of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the two German states, in which no nuclear weapons would be stationed. A lot has happened since 1957 and nuclear weapons are stationed all over this area now. The new Rapacki plan is accordingly more modest and merely proposes a freeze on all nuclear and thermonuclear armaments in the zone. This means that no more weapons could be added to the supply that is already there. To make sure that the status quo is maintained, the Polish Foreign Minister proposes a system of inspection at all points of access to the zone--airports, frontier checkpoints, railways, and seaports...by "commissions composed of representatives of the Warsaw Pact and of the North Atlantic Treaty on a parity basis."

So far I have not seen any indication of much American interest in the Polish proposal, for that matter, in any of the Soviet initiatives. President Johnson sent a carefully worded, and in general, constructive reply to Premier Khrushchov's New Year's message, but there has been no indication of a serious desire to move the dialogue forward.

Aside from the fact that this is an election year, there is another more important reason why there has been no important response to the Soviet peace campaign. I believe that it is because the State Department recognizes that there is one fundamental issue that underlies all three of these documents that I have just mentioned. It is an issue of transcendental importance in world politics; an issue concerning which American policy is rigid and frozen. It is the issue of Germany.

There is no problem in world affairs about which the Soviets and Eastern Europeans are more concerned. Nothing arouses their fears and emotions like the German question. The war with Germany was a traumatic experience for the Soviet people. Much more so than it was for us. It cost them over 20 million people killed and a countryside laid waste. Nothing like that happened to the United States. The Soviets have violent prejudices against the Germans. It will take generations of peace before those feelings are mitigated. And it will take some imaginative

diplomacy in Central Europe if Soviet fears of a revival of German aggressiveness are to be quieted.

As I studied the Khrushchov New Year's Message, the Geneva Proposals, and the new Rapacki plan, I could not help but note how they all seemed anchored in the German question. Sometimes the language was quite specific. For example, the Khrushchov note says:

"The demands of the revenge-seeking circles of certain states which were the aggressors in the Second World War, constitute a special class among such claims. Those circles which crave revenge for the lost war are harboring plans for a revision of the just postwar territorial settlement. In the first place they want to get hold of those territories which went to other states by way of eliminating the consequences of aggression and providing guarantees of security for the future. Such territorial 'claims' must be resolutely rejected, as being incompatible with the interests of peace, because nothing but a new world war can grow out of those claims." So reads the Khrushchov message in part.

This it seems to me is the heart of the matter. The Soviets are afraid that the West Germans will try to unify Germany by force and claim East Prussia and the area beyond the Oder-Neisse River which are now part of Poland. West Germany has never renounced her claim on these areas; indeed, the West German government publishes guide books which include maps that show these areas as part of Germany.

The aim of the Soviet government has been, and is, to get the Western powers to conclude a peace treaty with Germany that will recognize the two existing de facto governments and the present frontiers. The United States has resolutely refused to do this. We have insisted on the reunification of Germany under an electoral system that would guarantee the election of a pro-Western government, and we have further demanded that that government be free to join NATO. It is a demand to which the Soviets could never be expected to accede.

American policy on Germany, like American policy with regard to China is completely paralyzed by domestic American politics. Communist bloc statements in recent years have revealed a rather sophisticated appreciation of this fact. It is possible, therefore, that Khrushchov's New Years Message may be a device to allow the United States to change its German policy without appearing to do so. Suppose for example, that a treaty was negotiated which embodied the general ideas contained in the Soviet proposal. Then suppose that like the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty it was thrown open to the adherence of other nations that might wish to sign. If the U S signed and West Germany did not, there would be a serious cause of friction in the Western Alliance. Moreover, if West Germany did not sign, this failure would tend to verify the propaganda claims of the Soviets that she has expansionist ambitions. And if West Germany did sign, it would amount to something fairly close to de facto recognition of the East German regime. One must admit, that the proposal has a certain amount of brilliance.

But I think there is more to the situation than a clever diplomatic gambit, for I detect in Soviet pronouncements of late a growing sense of desperation. The real reason for this is the American insistence to move ahead with the so-called NATO multilateral nuclear force. This is the administration's device whereby it hopes to satisfy the demand of our NATO allies to become nuclear powers without permitting the dissemination of nuclear weapons to other countries.

The two aims, of course, are contradictory. It is hard to see how West Germany, for example, can join the nuclear club without getting nuclear weapons. The multilateral nuclear force is our attempt to solve this contradiction. It is, in my opinion, a monstrosity--a dreadful, and dangerous monstrosity.

The multilateral force is to be a fleet of 25 surface ships each bearing eight Polaris A-3 ballistic missiles. The ships would be manned by mixed crews of different NATO nationalities, and the decision to go to war would be made by some sort of NATO committee subject to an American veto. The West Germans are enthusiastic about this proposal, the French are opposed to it, and the British seem unable to make up their minds. The Russians are convinced that the effect of the multilateral force will be to put nuclear weapons in the hands of the Germans. A good statement of the Soviet viewpoint can be found in an article by Boris Teplinsky, a retired Soviet Air Major-General, published in the Moscow publication, NEW TIMES for February 19, 1964. This article is a sophisticated analysis, very much like the sort of thing the Rand Corporation produces in this country. It reveals a familiarity with the American literature on military strategy as well as with the general Western position and arguments.

I quote from the Teplinsky article: "A united NATO nuclear force (irrespective of whether it is designated as 'interallied,' 'multilateral', or by some other name) would be the most convenient disguise of its real purpose, which is to give the West German revanchists nuclear weapons. For though Italy, and even Britain, have agreed to contribute to the crew of the experimental ship [Teplinsky is here referring to the first pilot project to be launched this year] they have done so under strong pressure from Washington. Whatever shape or form the project finally takes, and no matter how many countries are involved, the 'multilateral' force will be bilateral, dominated by the US and Federal Germany. Bonn has agreed to defray 40 per cent of the five billion needed to finance the scheme. And it is not doing so for the privilege of sailing the Atlantic, nor for partnership in a pirate fleet. It wants more even than nuclear missiles--it wants the right to dispose of the nuclear warheads at its own discretion."

Teplinsky's reference to the pirate fleet refers to the plan to have the ships disguised as merchant vessels so that they can deploy themselves among ordinary ships in regular shipping lanes and be more difficult to detect. The Russians have said that this would be done to make it possible for the ships to sneak up on targets and deliver surprise attacks. The British have denounced the idea of this camouflage, and I do not know where the proposal stands at the moment, although the February 3rd issue of the authoritative Aviation Week regards the disguise as part of the current plan.

The public position of the West German defense minister tends to support Teplinsky's analysis of West German motives in this arrangement. The New York Times for May 28, 1963 reports an interview with Defense Minister Kai-Uwe von Hassel in Bonn just after the meeting of the NATO Council of Ministers. I quote from the Times article:

"von Hassel feels that more radical measures are needed to ensure the security of West Germany and the other European states. In an interview with a Frankfurt newspaper given in Ottawa, the Defense Minister set as Bonn's security goals the stationing of medium-range nuclear rockets in Europe and the creation of an allied nuclear force free from a United States veto on its employment." So said the Times on last May 28. It seems to me that the Germans would like to have the multilateral nuclear force established, then they would want the American veto power ended. From then on it is anybody's guess.

Present trends seem to indicate that the United States will continue to move in the direction of German demands. Last October 27 Secretary of State Rusk made a speech in St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt, Germany. He said: "We must keep steadfastly before us our objective of the reunification of the German people in freedom... It follows from this that we must do nothing in negotiations with the Communist nations which would appear to put the stamp of approval on the status quo of the German people. It also follows that we must not allow such negotiations to place in jeopardy the growing strength and unity of the West." So said Secretary

Rusk in a speech which is printed in the State Department Bulletin for November 11.

One of President Johnson's closest advisers on European questions is former Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Acheson wrote an article on European defense for the New York Times which was published in the Western Edition on December 21. "In making political and military judgments affecting Europe," said Acheson, "a major--often the major--consideration should be their effect on the German people and the German government. It follows from this that the closest liaison and consultation with the German Government is absolutely necessary." I continue to quote from Acheson with some elipsis. "Germany is the most sensitive and responsive of all European countries to American action... German reactions are important, far reaching, and possibly decisive." And Acheson finally advises: "Don't continue the British-American-Soviet talks about Germany. The uneasiness and suspicion they cause in Germany far outweigh the massed cliches about keeping contact, doors open and avenues explored."

It is because I believe the views of Rusk and Acheson which I just quoted predominate in the American government, that I do not think it is likely that there will be a favorable response to the ideas put forward in Khrushchov's New Year 's message. I think this is unfortunate. I hope that it won't be disastrous. I hope that Khrushchov doesn't desperately need a favorable response to his peace initiative in order to keep his military under control and maintain his policy of peaceful coexistence.

Khrushchov's New Year's Message was also sent to the West German government. Last week-end the West German government delivered a negative response. In reply to this message from a head of state, the Germans sent their reply to the Kremlin in the hands of a chauffeur who was driving a truck and was instructed to leave the note with the guards at the gate. Protocol would require delivery by someone of ambassadorial rank at least. It was a deliberate insult.

Let us hope that Mr. Khrushchov is a patient man.