



Policy Study No. 75

A Case for Coherence

assumptions and aims of British foreign policy

George Urban



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The Rationale for a White Paper on Foreign Policy

NATIONS with a long habit of making foreign policy on a world scale may be forgiven for feeling that they need no written formula to explain what they have always been doing. Britain, unlike France or the US, has no written constitution, yet the occasions on which Britons felt that they would be more equitably governed if their constitutional rights and duties were enshrined in a written instrument, have been few. Does the same apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to foreign policy? Is there some unwritten understanding among those who make British foreign policy that too careful a definition of what is instinctively felt to be right might run counter to its character and conduct, even though Britain is no longer a world power? It is to these underlying questions that this paper attempts to address itself.

There is no annual white paper on foreign policy. Thus the Foreign and Commonwealth Office vote of £564m, which covers all of our external relations including the overseas service of the BBC and the British Council, goes through Parliament without discussion. Debates on foreign policy are held at irregular intervals; usually they cover far too large a field. Though sometimes 'great occasions', they do not as a rule ask the Government to take any particular action, nor do they present to the public the rationale of what it is doing.

This is at first sight reasonable since an honest description of what our external policy should be might offend foreign governments; any paper which sought to avoid offence would be insipid.

Yet if Parliament does not speak of the 'larger purposes', may these not be easily forgotten, even not discussed at all? Tactics do not make sense unless they serve a clear strategy, and strategy needs long-term aims. We are all aware that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with its great network of information-gathering, is admirable at knowing 'what is going on'; but it is less satisfactory at determining what *should* be going on. Constitutionally, this state of affairs cannot be faulted. Politicians conceive policy; officials carry it out. But not every Foreign Secretary has a policy that he wishes to be carried through, or one that ought to be carried out. His private office is almost always staffed by able practitioners of the craft of diplomacy, but men who have set their sights on wider horizons and seek philosophical justifications

for what we are doing, are seldom to be found.*

Fortunately for the US, every incoming Secretary of State is examined by Congress before he is confirmed in office. This gives him an opportunity to define his broad policies and the US public a chance to find out what they are. Furthermore, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate is a powerful body with its own numerous staff. It probes and scrutinises continuously and in detail in order to bring before the public the main issues of foreign policy.

No such opportunity exists in Britain except that afforded by the new Select Committee on Foreign Policy. That Committee, however, usually enquires into the execution of foreign policy. It does not touch on fundamental aims and assumptions, nor seek to impart to the British public a sense of intelligent participation.

But the US example is not wholly attractive. The work of the various Committees of the two Houses of Congress is frequently uninformed or inordinately swayed by narrow domestic considerations and determined pressure groups. It can weaken and undermine the power of the Administration to define and conduct foreign policy and disorient public opinion both at home and abroad.

The reluctance to write down, to explain and publicly to defend principles of policy may have been at the root of many of our mistakes and misjudgements in the twentieth century. We have public records to guide us on what happened in the past up till the 1950s. All the evidence we have studied goes to show that we did not know how to deal with ideologically inspired men of the cunning of Hitler, Stalin, Nasser, or Khomeini, and indeed with any regime in which ideology played a significant role.

Most Western foreign offices and chancelleries are, after all, geared to dealing with traditional powers showing traditional behaviour motivated by traditional reasoning. Powers which are ideologically motivated are alien to our comprehension. We tend therefore to deal

* Dr Kissinger (who did have policies which he wished to implement) made much the same point about the US Department of State. 'If they have no policy at the outset, or are actually ignorant of the issues with which they have to deal', cabinet members 'learn how to make decisions but not what decisions to make . . . the less they know at the outset, the more they are dependent on . . . the permanent officials' (Kissinger, *Memoirs*, Boston, 1979, 1, 27).

The increasing use of telex and telephone, he argued, further obstruct the reflection needed before strategies are worked out. Would the National Security Council as it is now constituted be capable of preparing a paper of the intellectual quality of NSC 68? The State Department, like our Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has no constitutional requirement to define foreign policy.

with ideological powers as if they were of the traditional kind. Many of our difficulties are rooted in this misidentification.*

We know very well that, over the last three decades, our diplomats have had to conduct themselves against a background of continuous economic decline. But a case can be made that businessmen have also had to act against a background of constant *diplomatic* failure (our reluctance to make a commitment before 1914; appeasement of Germany in the late 1930s; encouragement of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, instead of the German and Russian). Our reluctance to plan ahead led to the series of humiliating negotiations with the European Community, the memory of which still dogs our relations with our European partners. It may be too much to argue that we should have thought through more carefully the withdrawal from the African Empire, and examined whether it could be co-ordinated with that of our European partners. But it does seem that we were badly prepared for the coming of major rivalry with the Soviet Union after 1945.

The fact that Britain is now a medium-rank power does not make the issues of foreign policy which face her any less complex, or less fraught with far-reaching consequences than when a powerful Empire was governed from London. British interests are still world-wide. The conduct of foreign policy has, furthermore, become more difficult since a multitude of new states in Asia and Africa have emerged on the international stage—and now that an ideological style, even if it be a bastard style, of politics has, increasingly, become the norm in many parts of the world. Ethnic minorities in Britain further complicate matters.

Traditionally, foreign policy is conceived as a function of sovereign states, whereas we are now locked into several permanent alliances and international organisations which limit our freedom of action. We are part of the European Community, some of whose articulate spokesmen have the long-term aim of federalism. Indeed, our ill-defined and domestically ill-understood relation to the European Community alone justifies the need for fresh thought to be given to the purposes of foreign

* Professor Richard Pipes makes a similar point about the US State Department: 'Because totalitarian regimes do not operate within a narrowly defined concept of foreign policy, the collective record of the world's foreign services in dealing with them has been most unimpressive. By virtue of their professional upbringing, diplomats could never take seriously the ravings of a Lenin, a Hitler or a Mao, and so they dismissed them as rhetoric behind which had to lie concealed the dictator's "real" demands, and concentrated on discovering what those "real" demands were, in order to bring them to the negotiating table' (*Survival is Not Enough*, New York, 1984).

policy. The European treaties envisage a continuing process of 'integration'. The idea of political union and the revision of the Rome treaties has gained many advocates. Their aim is to make the European Community capable of developing a joint foreign policy, and, perhaps, the military potential to give it effect. Meanwhile the common market between the member states remains incomplete.

The interrelation between our policy towards the European Community and that towards NATO has so determining an effect on our future that a profound analysis should now be given to it. Our commitment to NATO does not need to cut across that to the EEC, but, if political co-operation proceeds further, it could. One can already detect a latent tension between the Atlanticist and the European orientation in British foreign policy. British and Continental political styles and traditions are also often mutually incomprehensible.

Soviet policy towards those countries which possess the will to resist Moscow's demands is to subvert them by clandestine means, through front organisations, indigenous communist parties, or espionage. Although this policy has been practised since 1917, the West has still not learned how to respond in an effective manner. For strategic reasons, the destabilisation of Britain is a major Soviet aim; without British membership, NATO would probably be inoperable. The encouragement of differences between the US and Western Europe is a permanent aim of Soviet foreign policy. It was conspicuously present in Gorbachev's visits to Britain in December 1984, and to France in October 1985.

The Soviet leadership opposes the British Government's political philosophy but respects the strength and determination with which it is pursued. The Falklands campaign apparently impressed the leaders of the USSR and, despite the tough retaliation to the expulsion of thirty-one Soviet spies from London in September 1985, Gorbachev thereafter showed his desire to resume 'normal' links with Britain. Recent spy scandals in West Germany, France and other West European countries recall the need for greater efforts to be made to counter the Soviet Union's long-term strategy of subversion.

2 What Kind of World?

‘What kind of world are we trying to create?’ or, more correctly, ‘What kind of world should we be trying to create?’

The preservation within Britain of democracy, respect for individual freedom and concern for objective truth, are linked to the strength of these values world-wide. It is a parochial illusion to imagine that they are so innately human that they are bound to triumph, or that a ‘fortress Britain’ could have either the resources or, in the longer run, the self-confidence to maintain them in the face of a world dominated by hostile political forces.

Given the ever-increasing interdependence of the world’s theoretically still sovereign states, Britain has to think hard about the world order in which its interests and values can best be preserved. It then has to be willing to play its part in identifying threats to that order and warding them off. Its policies should not be merely negative and reactive—e.g. to impede the creation of a Soviet world empire. We must have the courage and self-confidence to assert Western values, and to defend those overseas who share them.

Although it may be neither desirable nor possible to seek to impose our political culture on the unwilling citizens of foreign states, we should never hesitate to proclaim the benefits of Western culture. Whether we do so or no, our adversaries—be they Marxist-Leninist or Muslim Fundamentalist—will go on spreading the myth that the Western democracies (tainted by ‘imperialism’, ‘capitalism’, ‘colonialism’ etc.) are the source of all the world’s evils.

Before defining our future role, however, certain facts and assumptions need to be noted:

- i The military domination of the world by the two so-called superpowers is likely to continue at least in the immediate future, even though US public opinion is reluctant to shoulder the role of ‘empire’. But neither the US nor the USSR will be able to eliminate concentrations of power outside their spheres of influence.
- ii The irreversible enmity of the USSR towards parliamentary democracy, capitalism, the rule of law and the free flow of ideas, together with its commitment to spreading its own values across the world by whatever means, fair or foul, which seem

- convenient to it at any moment, may not rule out the temporary suspension of animosity. Soviet resources may be switched from defence to other parts of the economy. There may be periodic recognition of common interests with the West on certain issues: most Soviet leaders share with their Western counterparts an apprehension of nuclear war. But it is an illusion to imagine that the Soviet Union could be a reliable ally in the preservation of international stability on any terms other than the extension of Soviet-style socialism to the whole globe.
- iii Hence all states committed to Western ideals are likely indefinitely to depend on US military power and the willingness of the American people to aid and support their allies. The members of the European Community possess the resources, skills and maturity to play a greater role than at present in the defence of their interests and values, world-wide and at home, but they prefer not to co-ordinate their policies. Their unwillingness to shoulder the burden of Western defence outside NATO as defined at present is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
 - iv Britain's position is unique both in its weaknesses and opportunities. Underlying Britain's problems is an economic performance poor by almost any standards. Economic decline has encouraged indigenous movements committed to the destruction of Britain's social order. Some of these draw support from certain Trade Union leaders and have a hold on sections of the Labour Party.
 - v One of Britain's assets is its position as a hinge between the European Community and the overseas English-speaking world, especially the US. Britain's position as the home of *the* contemporary international language is also a great, albeit ambiguous, asset.
 - vi The USSR will continue to deny self-determination to the citizens of the client states of Eastern Europe. The establishment of this right—perhaps one of the most important of the Helsinki accords—should be a major aim of all Europeans. Moscow is likely to find the burdens of its European empire increasingly insupportable and to have to face more crises with every decade that passes.
 - vii Islamic fundamentalism represents a threat to both Western and Soviet interests. Its leaders challenge the norms of civilised

relations between states painfully established over the last three hundred years quite as much as the communists do. It is unlikely that even full US support would enable the Israelis to impose a stable settlement in their portion of the Middle East. This region will therefore probably remain unstable. Despite latent support for some parts of European culture, Western Europe is unlikely to be a significant force in the Middle East, and this cannot be expected to change in the foreseeable future.

- viii The shift in world economic power towards the Pacific will continue. It may have consequences as far-reaching as the shift from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic in 1450–1600. Evidence of ‘unfair’ Japanese trading practices should not blind us to the managerial efficiency, hard work, high educational achievements and social cohesiveness, which are the keys to Japan’s success.
- ix The success or failure of China’s present economic experiment will determine the future balance of power in Asia. China’s ability to act as a check to Soviet military power and as a model of an alternative ‘communist’ system in direct political and ideological competition with the Soviet model is a safeguard of sorts, though scarcely a reliable one. A strong China, allowing more free enterprise and with its prosperity linked to that of the world capitalist economy, is a major European interest. But no one can forecast whether China’s encouragement of private enterprise is a temporary phenomenon—nor indeed where her policies might lead her over the next twenty years.
- x The UN will probably remain ineffective in preventing and controlling aggression.
- xi World population will grow until the second half of the next century while Europe’s population will probably remain the same or decline. If low growth is globally achieved, the world may in time become more stable. At the same time, however, the relative erosion of European cultural influence, not least within the US, may be a decivilising influence.
- xii Modern technology will continue to cause dislocation, especially in those societies which fail to take advantage of it and still cling to restrictive attitudes. Continuing failures of this sort may ultimately lead to social catastrophes similar to those which befell many non-Europeans in the last century when

faced by Western competition. A genteel, continued decline into backwardness and poverty on the lines of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy is also possible.

In the light of these factors and of our own interests and ideals, what kind of world order should we seek to achieve? In negative terms the answer is simple. A nuclear conflict would threaten the eclipse of civilised life. Everything should be done to prevent both nuclear war itself and situations in which Britain would have to choose between surrendering vital principles and using nuclear weapons.

All states holding democratic values should collaborate in ensuring that the world is not dominated by countries happy to use force in pursuit of their goals and animated by expansionist and anti-liberal ideologies. The US, Western Europe, Japan and the Old Commonwealth (roughly, that is, the OECD), must together shoulder most of the burden, remaining sufficiently united and strong to sustain morale during what may be a long period of challenge from Soviet communism.

While our need for American power and leadership has not changed, Japan should be encouraged to exert a political role in world affairs commensurate with her economic power. Far more weight than at present should be attached to Japanese-European and Japanese-American cultural relations.

Europeans should recall that isolationism, by no means dead in the US, was a major factor in Europe's slide into war in the 1930s, just as the US military commitment to our continent in the 1940s rescued us from otherwise almost certain domination, by either Hitler's Germany or Stalin's Russia.

Though from a European perspective US policy has many blind-spots, self-congratulation on the superior statesmanship of Europeans, anyway insupportable in the light of what happened in 1914 and 1939, should await the day when we have proved sufficiently competent to mobilise our considerable resources to share equally with the US the burden of defending mutual interests in all parts of the world.

In the meantime the British can rejoice in the fact that geography as well as history has given them a major role within the European Community, NATO and the English-speaking world. On the internal strength of these communities, together with the links we can forge with Japan, much depends.

The US, Soviet Union, and Europe

In 1983 the Centre for Policy Studies produced a paper entitled 'What we ought to do about the Soviet Threat'. One matter which was not discussed in that paper was whether Great Britain or the EEC should have a policy towards the Soviet Union different from that of the US.

We believe that it would be imprudent for either Great Britain or Western Europe to have a foreign policy towards the Soviet Union independent of the US. Policy depends on power and that is what the Soviet Union respects. We should, therefore, continue to work closely with the US and not seek independent postures. We may have a policy which differs from that of the US towards Argentina or France, but not towards the Soviet Union. Gaullism, if repeated, either by ourselves or by our partners or Western Europe as a whole, would help the Soviet Union to achieve its long-term aim of 'decoupling' Western Europe from the US.

This does not mean, however, that Britain and the European allies should not seek to probe into the reality of the Soviet system and acquire a more profound understanding of the Soviet empire than they have done hitherto. This may, for historical and geographical reasons, be easier for Europe than for the US, but we should beware of Soviet attempts to create divisions between the US and Western Europe.

Nor does our general support of US policies *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union mean that we should refrain from canvassing our views with the American Administration. We can expect to have a better understanding with the US if it is clear to the American leaders that we are operating from within, rather than outside, the Alliance.

The habit of seeking to advise from within rather than from outside is particularly desirable, since, if past experience is any guide, it will almost certainly be necessary in the future to put pressure on the US (as, for example, with the Carter Administration). The US has mercurial politics and a volatile Congress. It is often partially immobilised for one or more years out of four. In 1977 it was Chancellor Schmidt who had to point out the weaknesses of the Western nuclear defence position and the need to balance the Soviet preponderance in INF forces with equivalent forces.

The Soviet Union

In our dealings with the Soviet Union, we should be guided by the following considerations:

- i Ideology, as the philosophical legitimation of Soviet rule, is more important for the Soviet leadership than most Western statesmen seem to realise, even after forty years of 'armed truce', to use the candid phrase of Emmanuel Litvinov in conversation with a US ambassador in 1946.* While it is true that the Politburo will be guided principally by the national interests of the Soviet Union when crucial decisions have to be made, ideology provides the frame, the justification and the language for all actions taken.
- ii Accordingly, Western leaders should seek to familiarise themselves more than they do at present with the place of ideology in Soviet thinking. In the communist world, Marxist-Leninist jargon is the compulsory language of politics. All policy has to be justified or repudiated in ideological terms. This does not mean that communist politics are exclusively about ideology. It does mean, however, that ideology is not an esoteric but a political instrument of immediate practical application.
- iii What may appear on the surface to be disputes about ideology are often the expression of disagreements about policy or signs of a struggle for power and vice versa. Forbidding as ideology may seem, some knowledge of the ideological landscape is essential for gaining a true insight into the nature of communist politics and the code of behaviour to which Soviet leaders must conform.
- iv By virtue of its system of government, the Soviet Union is able to operate a total foreign policy of which diplomacy forms but a small part. The Soviet system incorporates much of the Russian autocratic tradition. The new autocracy is more secretive and the new ideology more exclusive. The newly appointed Foreign Minister, Edward Shevardnadze, a party apparatchik with little experience of dealing with the outside world, will, like Gorbachev himself, be dependent on the

* Public Record Office, FO 371/56833 N 8027/605/39: Frank Roberts's report 5 June 1946, about a discussion between Litvinov and Bedell Smith, US Ambassador.

expertise provided by officials of the International Department of the Central Committee.

- v Although the Comintern was formally dissolved in 1943, its revolutionary international activities appear to continue under the direction of the International Department, headed by Boris Ponomarev. The International Information Department, under Leonid Zamiatin, is also involved in Soviet foreign policy. Both make use of the intelligence and subversive apparatus of the KGB and the GRU, as appropriate. In their dealings with these Soviet officials, especially when they pose as Soviet parliamentarians, British and Western politicians should avoid the 'mirror-image' fallacy. Soviet basic hostility to the West is such that 'the view that it can be assuaged by personal contacts, rational arguments or official assurances constitutes the most insidious and dangerous single error which Americans can make'.*
- vi These suspicions have little to do with the legacy of the West's intervention in the Civil War after the Revolution. They belong to the corpus of distrust built into Leninism with its roots in the traditional Russian suspicion of foreigners: 'We are living not only in a State but in a system of states and the existence of the Soviet republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the other must triumph in the end'.** While it is true that Lenin lived before the age of nuclear weapons, there is no doubt that the present Soviet leadership believes, as its predecessors did, that some kind of *conflict* with the West is inevitable, especially in the developing world. As Krushchev stated on 6 January 1961: 'We Communists believe that the idea of Communism will ultimately be victorious throughout the world.'
- vii The conflict is now primarily one of subversion, support for guerrilla movements in so-called wars of liberation, disinformation, propaganda; but the possibility of intimidation by threat of war is always present, too.
- viii So long as the treaties signed with the Soviet Union are made with a true public understanding of the Soviet attitude towards them, no harm is done. Contrary to received 'liberal' opinion, deception is built into the Soviet system. It appears that the

* George Kennan, last despatch from Moscow, *Foreign Relations of the US*, 1946, vi, 721.

** V. I. Lenin, *Works*, 4th Russian edn., 1919, Vol. 29, 133.

Soviet Union has cheated on the ratified SALT I Agreement and the unratified SALT II, as well, probably, as on the ABM treaty of 1972 and its protocol of 1974.

Gorbachev's priority is to make the Soviet economy more efficient without undertaking a full-scale economic reform, with all the political risks that would entail. He shows no sign of altering foreign policy, for example by withdrawing Soviet troops from Afghanistan or changing basic Soviet attitudes in talks about arms control in Geneva. Even if the Soviet Union were to decline as a superpower, it would, by virtue of its vast resources, its system of government and its military power, continue to be a major threat to us, as to Western interests generally. If Soviet decline were to become more rapid, the Soviet leadership might be tempted to pursue adventurist policies in order to restore the regime's prestige. Support for 'struggles for national liberation', a fundamental part of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union since at least the 1950s—and rooted in the theory of communist revolution from 1917—runs counter to the Western concept of a peaceful world and the resolution of conflicts by compromise. Compromise is a concept alien to Russian thinking. There is, indeed, no native equivalent for it in the Slav languages.

There is a tendency to over-emphasise the Soviet military threat to the West while under-estimating the economic and political threat. Parallel to the enormous build-up of Soviet military power in the last two decades, Soviet subversion continues to play a major role in certain situations such as, for example, the controversy over cruise missiles in the Netherlands. The scale and quality of Soviet espionage flow from the nature of the Soviet system. There should be close and effective co-operation between all Western countries in taking appropriate measures to counter it. Moreover, the work of many terrorist organisations thrives on Marxist theories about the collapse of capitalist societies and especially on the millenarian expectation that it is the duty of revolutionaries to play midwife to the will of history. The Soviet government usually eschews direct involvement with these organisations, but it does maintain contact through intermediaries with whom it has close relations. We should ensure that the public is made aware of the true nature of these '*liaisons dangereuses*'.

One of the components of an effective foreign policy is knowledge. We consider that there is a need for a Centre of Soviet and East European Studies to be established in Great Britain. This should be a repository of information and a clearing house of ideas. We have in mind something

akin to the International Institute for Strategic Studies. The post-war generation of Soviet specialists is fast disappearing. This would be one way of ensuring continuity.

With few exceptions the British government (and Western governments generally) have kept Soviet dissidents at arm's length. The argument has been that too close an involvement would furnish the Soviet authorities with a good excuse for claiming that dissidents as a group were Western agents. This is a mistaken policy. We should, openly or behind the scenes, exert or continue to exert pressure to ensure that the leaders of British opinion and the public as a whole are constantly informed about the state of human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the state of opposition to the Soviet system. Dissidents and their programmes provide the seed-plot for an alternative society and culture. We should publicise their ideas and use them in our broadcasts.

The Muslim republics in Soviet Central Asia, the Baltic countries, the Caucasus and the Ukraine, continue to be sources of instability to the Soviet leadership. More resources should be devoted to the study of these areas. Increased knowledge will provide a better basis for determining future policy, and allow us to increase broadcasts, preferably in conjunction with our European and US partners; but if necessary, alone.

Eastern Europe

Although countries of Eastern and Central Europe, except for Albania and Yugoslavia, remain enmeshed in the Soviet system of alliances (the Warsaw Pact and CMEA), and probably all share in the Soviet intelligence apparatus, there are increasing signs that some of the East and Central European communist leaderships are anxious to attain or retain a certain measure of independence from Moscow. The potential for disloyalty is considerable. Moscow itself seems to be in two minds as to how these countries should be handled. Gorbachev and some Soviet spokesmen thought to be close to his thinking have repeatedly said that centrifugal, nationalist tendencies would not be tolerated, and that East Europeans should not assume the role of intermediaries between the Kremlin and the West. At the same time, other views favour a more permissive acceptance of disparate national interests and, by implication, different roads to 'socialism'. The conflict is unresolved. The room for manoeuvre which some East European leaderships attained for themselves under the ailing Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, is still there but may not be for much longer.

In Poland, despite the October 1985 'elections', nothing has been settled. The uneasy co-existence between official Poland and the alternative society led by Solidarity continues. General Jaruzelski relies on the moderation of the Church and the residual prestige of the army to contain the forces of opposition. The people have one culture, one sense of national interest and one set of values—official Poland has another. The two are in conflict though, at the moment, not open conflict.

Since the Revolution of 1956, Hungary has followed its own economic and cultural path, demonstrating a remarkable sense of sophistication in 'playing' the Soviet system. As long as the Party stays firmly in control, and Hungary continues to support Soviet foreign policy in every detail, Soviet tolerance may continue. Should, however, economic unorthodoxy spill over into political pluralism, the Hungarians may have to reckon with Soviet displeasure and a threat to their experiment.

In Czechoslovakia Charter 77 continues to represent the spirit of 1968. The long paralysis of the Czech and Slovak nations appears to be ending, with the Catholic Church becoming the centre of spiritual revival.

In Romania an ailing Ceaucescu has completed twenty years of rule. The country is in a grave economic crisis which may cause the fall of the Ceaucescu clan in the foreseeable future. Disaffection in the working class and even the army seems widespread. This spring (1986) will be a time of trial for the regime.

Bulgaria remains a bastion of loyalty to the Soviet Union in the sense that the true feelings of the population are more easily harnessed or suppressed than they are elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The brutal treatment meted out to the Turkish minority may have been put in train without direct Soviet approval, and may yet land Zhivkov into trouble with Gorbachev's leadership.

In East Germany, Erich Honecker continues to try to maintain his country's own special relationship with West Germany, as well as coping with the problems of the regime's legitimacy. He was forced to cancel a visit to Bonn in early 1985 because of Russian pressure. The Federal Republic remains the standard of comparison for the average East German citizen. Official SED policy continues to be a united Germany, provided it is 'socialist'.

Outside the Warsaw Pact, Albania has, since the death of Hoxha, shown signs of wishing to emerge from its self-imposed isolation and is currently negotiating with Britain about the establishment of diplomatic relations. Its principal opening is *vis-à-vis* Italy. Albania apparently fears a new Soviet drive towards the Adriatic that might jeopardise the survival of the multinational Yugoslav state and thus also of Albania.

In Yugoslavia the legacy of Tito survives. The Yugoslav state has held together despite a severe economic crisis, popular disaffection and separatist tendencies in the various republics, notably the Albanian province of Kosovo.

We should make a conscious effort to support the East and Central European nations' manifest desire to be and to be seen to be part of the European community of nations. Europe as a focus of belonging is a magnet for the whole region. The creation of a separate East European Department in the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Secretary's recent visits to Eastern Europe, were steps in the right direction. Our policy should be to differentiate between the various East and Central European countries and between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The road to liberalisation in Eastern Europe does not necessarily lead through Moscow. The reverse may turn out to be the case under Gorbachev.

We should therefore encourage every possible exchange and the

independent pursuit of East European national interests. We should especially support exchange in the commercial and cultural fields, always provided that increased trade does not contribute to the military strength and technological sophistication of the Warsaw Pact countries, and does not make it easier for the Soviet Union to avoid paying the economic cost of its political hegemony in Eastern Europe. We should propound the idea that NATO would be prepared to guarantee Soviet security in Central Europe if an enlightened Soviet leadership were to decide that the satellite-status of Eastern Europe was so grave an economic and political liability that the Kremlin could no longer support it. It must be part of our policy to make it a liability, using all legitimate means at our disposal.

Disarmament and Arms Control

Before 1914 governments and peoples assumed that war and military conflict between and within states was part of human life. From time to time they sought to persuade each other to accept rules of war whereby nations conducted themselves honourably when in conflict. The enormous increase in the destructive power of weapons of war produced during and since World War II, particularly atomic and nuclear weapons, intensified the desire of governments to reduce armaments. This urge has raised arms control and disarmament to a higher level of priority in the formulation of foreign and defence policies, both in East and West, though for different reasons.

World War II ended with two major victors: the US (assisted by British scientists), in possession of the atomic bomb, and the Soviet Union, without an atomic weapon but with overwhelming conventional military superiority in Europe and North-East Asia. Stalin's primary aim was to match the power and military strength of the US and he thus embarked on a programme of providing the Soviet Union not only with atomic and nuclear weapons but also with a land-based intercontinental delivery system capable of reaching targets in North America. The Soviet Union achieved a nuclear explosion in 1949 and completed its offensive capability when, in 1959, after the first mission in space it set up the Strategic Rocket Forces as a fifth branch of its armed forces. Ten years later, having surpassed the total of land-based strategic nuclear missiles established by the US in the 1960s—the US had 1054 launchers and the Soviets about 1400 (IISS figures)—the Soviet government declared its readiness to open negotiations with the US on Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT).

The result of these policies was to achieve numerical superiority in a strategic weapons system in which the Soviet Union placed the maximum trust—the land-based ICBMs. The Soviet leaders would then be able to negotiate with the US for an agreed 'upper limit' of such weapons, adding air-launched and submarine-launched missiles as they became available. Talks were also held on the complementary issue of anti-ballistic missile defences, which led to the treaties of 1972 and 1974. The Soviet Union believed that under this agreed strategic 'umbrella' they could develop their non-strategic and conventional forces with which to attain or support the foreign policy goals outlined in this paper.

While this process was under way the Soviet Union collaborated with the West directly and through the UN in talks on regional or technological arms control issues, such as on reduced European arms levels (MBFR), partial nuclear test bans, and nuclear non-proliferation issues, some of which resulted in treaties which have been at least partly honoured by those who signed and ratified them.

Arms control and disarmament are dominated by the effective breakdown of the SALT and START negotiations in the early 1980s, and by requirements for verification which have until very recently been incompatible. Against the background, on the one side, of the rebuilding of US forces and military-scientific potential, including the Space Defence Initiative (SDI), and, on the other, the lack for many years of decisive leadership in the Soviet Union, the strategic and the theatre arms race appears to have been resumed with few practical restraints. The US combines programmes of theatre weapons development (conventional, nuclear and possibly chemical) in Europe and elsewhere with an advanced research and testing programme of a space defence system which they hope could, when completed, significantly reduce the capability of the Soviet Union's strategic missiles to reach their targets in North America—and, perhaps, also in Europe. US advances in strategic missile defence research will complement efforts already under way in Western Europe to provide tactical anti-ballistic missile defence of the NATO area in Europe. The Russians are afraid of the 'great leap forward' involved in transferring such a revolutionary weapons system into space. They also fear its potential offensive capabilities, and its effect on Soviet military and national prestige *vis-à-vis* the West and in the rest of the world.

In this state of affairs the Soviet government is impelled by political, ideological and military motives to demand from the US the abandonment of SDI, and a return to the theory and practice of the SALT/CSCE eras. To forward its aims it has mounted a world-wide propaganda and diplomatic campaign to persuade Americans and their allies to oppose SDI—even in its research stage. Many of the diplomatic offers made as part of this campaign to the US and the West are in fact repetitions of earlier proposals, perhaps in part because of the lack of experience of foreign and military affairs of the new Soviet leaders, though new ideas may appear later. These proposals include familiar moratoria on tests, 'no first use' of nuclear weapons, and linkages between strategic and theatre weapons development; others appear to be more original, such as the proposed cuts in Soviet missile strength of up

to 40 per cent, in return for the cancellation of SDI and the elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000.

The overall picture, unchanged by the recent meeting of Gorbachev and Reagan, is, therefore, of a US apparently ready to proceed with its programmes on offensive missiles and defensive systems (at least in the research stage) and of a Soviet Union which, although it has formulated a decisive diplomatic response, has yet to enlist the sympathies of the West European peace movement, dispirited after the deployment of INF.

In these circumstances Britain must keep in as close touch as possible with the US and our European allies on the main arms control and disarmament issues. We must maintain the kind of co-operative liaison with the US government which will enable us to keep abreast of, and share in, developments in SDI while reserving the right to form our own opinion of the system, and to decide what role we should play in any future international talks on arms control. Above all, we should not give the Soviet government any impression either that we accept their interpretation of SDI, or that the Soviet Union can divide Britain and the US on this topic in political or alliance terms.

The present uncertain situation between the superpowers may, in fact, offer us opportunities to move closer to formulating agreed allied positions on arms control in Europe. If, for example, the Soviet government linked weapons totals in Europe, e.g. on INF deployments, or on the US-Soviet strategic missile numbers, we might be able to take the lead in suggesting figures and balances among the European members of NATO. We could have our proposals ready while the two major protagonists remain, for the reasons given, very far apart. Practical policy recommendations could follow which the NATO alliance might welcome.

The European Community

For Britain, membership of the European Community remains a matter more of the head than of the heart. We look to the Community to help us gain a number of important economic and political objectives which we could not pursue so effectively on our own. On the other hand, the Community figures hardly at all in public or private perceptions of our nation's historic role or its modern statehood.

A pragmatic approach to the Community is not unique to Britain. It is shared by Denmark and Greece and, among the larger member states, by France, whose Government's recent support for a 'qualitative leap' towards European union seems no more than a diversion from domestic political travails. Nor is such an approach the mark of a 'bad' Community partner. It is perfectly consistent with making a success of the Community we have; and with developing the Community, wherever development can be clearly linked to functional improvement.

The guiding principle of a pragmatic partner like Britain should be to ensure that the institutions of the Community have the powers they need—no more and no less—to discharge the tasks assigned to them. Questions about the institutions should not be posed in the abstract but in relation to particular areas of Community activity. This point can be illustrated by contrasting two areas of activity to which HMG attaches the highest priority: the creation of a genuine internal market, including a market for services; and the system of foreign policy co-ordination known as 'European Political Co-operation', which takes place outside the legal framework of the Treaties.

The Treaty of Rome provided a transitional period of twelve years for establishing a common market between the original member states. The Common Customs Tariff was in place, and all remaining customs and duties and quotas had been abolished, eighteen months ahead of schedule, in mid-1968. Yet there remained a multitude of non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as restrictions on the establishment and provision of services and on the movement of capital. While some further liberalisation has taken place in the intervening years, it is notorious that the objective of a market in which supply from all the member states would meet demand from all the member states without interruption by frontiers is still far from being realised.

Equally notorious, and a major reason why so many non-tariff

barriers have survived is the failure of the Council to adopt some hundreds of measures for the harmonisation of laws which have been proposed by the Commission under Article 100 of the Treaty. That, in turn, is attributable in large part to the rule of unanimity, which operates here not by the convention established following the so-called 'Luxembourg Compromise' of 1966 but under the Treaty itself. The rule means that harmonisation can proceed only at the pace of the slowest member state; and its effect is felt at all levels in the powers of decision-making. Should Article 100, then, be amended to allow the enactment of harmonisation measures by a qualified majority? Posed in this general way, the question naturally attracts a negative answer, owing to the almost unlimited scope of the Article. On the other hand, in relation to non-tariff barriers, Britain's interest in overcoming the obstructionism of one or two partners probably outweighs any risk of harm from the occasional vote that may go against us. The 'pragmatic' solution would, therefore, be for Article 100 to be 'broken up' into a series of powers of harmonisation exercisable in specific spheres by a qualified majority, together with a general residual power which would continue to require unanimity. In this way a major impediment to the completion of the common market would be removed, while the Governments of the member states would retain a 'veto' over the extension of harmonisation into new spheres.

The case of European Political Co-operation (EPC) is quite different. The Community could not have a fully-fledged foreign policy without a cabinet to formulate it and a diplomatic service and, ultimately, an army to execute it. Not even Spinelli is suggesting that. Consensus remains the right basis for EPC, though two changes in the system might be beneficial. One change would be the establishment of a small secretariat to improve continuity, and to provide back-up when the presidency of the Council is in the hands of one of the smaller member states. This would be compatible with the so-called 'troika' system of collaboration between the staffs of the President in office and those of the previous and succeeding presidencies. The second suggested change would be to confer on the Council power to legislate for the purpose of implementing agreed aspects of EPC, e.g. the imposition of economic sanctions on a third country. This is necessary because of Danish reservations about the scope of the residual power of legislation under Article 235 of the EEC Treaty. The new power would require amendment of the Treaty of Rome, bringing EPC within its scope. That need have no impact on the informality of the process of policy formulation. Consistent with the spirit of EPC, only a unanimous vote should be valid.

A pragmatic approach to the Community should be sensitive to the aspirations of those partners whose approach is more idealistic. The most important case is that of the Federal Republic of Germany. For many in Germany today a genuine choice appears to lie between continuing membership of the Community and the Western Alliance, on the one hand, and neutralisation, as the price of reunification, on the other. To ensure that the Federal Republic remains firmly attached to the first alternative must be a central aim of British and other Western countries' foreign policy. That aim will be in serious jeopardy if Germans begin to lose faith in the Community.

Although many useful institutional reforms could be achieved by adjustments to conventions, opposition in principle to the amendment of the Community Treaties is misconceived. We have already suggested some amendments that would satisfy the most austere pragmatic standards. Nor should we underestimate the importance to some of our partners of marking the present '*relance européenne*' with a grand gesture in the form of a new treaty. This could be achieved uncontroversially by a treaty for the fusion of the three Communities, which at present remain legally distinct, although they are served by a single set of institutions. A project for a treaty of fusion has been discussed in a desultory way for years and its reactivation now would serve both symbolic and practical purposes.

The notion of a two-tier Community has been put forward as a way of accommodating the differing degrees of enthusiasm among member states for further progress towards integration. Britain should work to prevent the adoption of such a strategy or, at all events, to avoid relegation to the lower tier of states. Those states would in practice feel the effects of decisions taken by the upper tier, without being able greatly to influence those decisions.

More acceptable is the strategy known as *géométrie variable*. This means, simply, that new areas of Community activity may be opened up without all the member states taking part, at least initially. An example is non-participation by Britain in the exchange-rate mechanism of the European Monetary System (EMS). If over-used the strategy might threaten the legal cohesion of the Community and come into conflict with the fundamental principle of non-discrimination; but it holds out the only realistic hope of progress on many matters of concern to Britain, e.g. the liberalisation of transport. The difference between *géométrie variable* and the two-tier strategy is that the former assumes it will not always be the same group of member states that joins in, or

holds aloof from, new initiatives, whereas the latter encourages the unacceptable idea of a permanent division of interests.

Finally, a pragmatic approach to membership of the Community need not be incoherent. As an alternative to the federalist programme, Britain should proclaim its own vision of 'a community of sovereign nations'. In truth, the notion of a federal United States of Europe has begun to seem old-fashioned, implying that states are the only political orders worthy of consideration. The Community provides a model better adapted to an interdependent world in which states survive but only as the most visible of a number of concentric and interlocking circles of power. The merit of the Community is that it is capable of answering to the practical need for common action, without threatening the polyglot and multifarious reality that is Europe. As such it could be an example to other groups of nations which wish to collaborate in economic and other matters without giving up their statehood.

The Commonwealth

The extent to which the Commonwealth should figure in any current discussion of Britain's external relations is a matter on which disagreement is possible. The defenders of the Commonwealth still point to it as a vehicle for the exercise of Britain's influence over the globe—a shadowy substitute for a vanished Empire—and advocate for that reason measures for strengthening ties between Britain and other Commonwealth members in trade, higher education, and so forth. The difficulty is that Britain's ability to do this is impaired by the obligations of the European Community. Thus, for instance, students from countries of the Community pay the same fees as British students while students from Commonwealth countries are treated as foreigners. Other defenders of the Commonwealth system see the use of it to lie in the fact that its membership bridges the alleged gap between the developed and the developing world, so providing a forum where leaders and officials from member countries of the two groups can talk to their mutual advantage.

From the point of view of the poorer countries which form the majority of Commonwealth countries, the picture is quite other. The cross-links between Commonwealth countries other than Britain are neither numerous nor important, apart from Canada's contributions in development, but the Commonwealth does provide a forum from which pressure can be brought to bear upon Britain in such matters as overseas aid and immigration and on political topics such as apartheid in South Africa. The 'Gleneagles Agreement', so damaging to British cricket, was the fruit of such pressure.

In considering the future one can rule out two suggestions canvassed in the past but no longer viable. One is the expansion of the system to include countries never under the British flag: for which no demand exists (the re-admission of Pakistan at some future date is not excluded should circumstances change). The other idea, that of a two-ring Commonwealth with an inner core of like-minded mainly white democracies, and an outer ring of the rest, would also no longer find serious adherents. The strength of the non-aligned movement makes political co-operation or defence co-operation on a Commonwealth basis inconceivable.

There is, however, one problem that may have to be resolved and that is the ambiguous position of the monarch. The British monarch is

head of state in only a limited number of Commonwealth countries—Australia, Canada, New Zealand and some smaller territories—but is also 'Head of the Commonwealth'. The monarch is bound on all things political by the advice of the cabinet in the country in which she is present—normally Britain; but it could be, for instance, Canada or Australia (though the prospect of Australia becoming a republic is a real one). When in a foreign country the British sovereign is treated as monarch of the United Kingdom so no constitutional problem arises. When in a Commonwealth country which is not a republic, presumably the same rule applies. But if, as in her 1984 Christmas broadcast, the Queen speaks as Head of the Commonwealth, she may say things which have policy implications. The importance of the issue lies perhaps in the view that keeping the Commonwealth together is regarded as an important function of the royal family and some support for the very institution of monarchy. The issues of Zimbabwe and Grenada both brought up these matters: both appear to have been affected by the consideration that the monarch had interests.

To dissolve the Commonwealth, which would presumably need general agreement, or unilaterally to withdraw appear to be exercises too radical for a government to undertake. On the other hand, to make more of the Commonwealth than at present is unrealistic in the light of our other commitments. It may be recalled that the Holy Roman Empire went on for a very long time with little discernible content; its princes seldom met except, as a rule, for war, hunting or marriage.

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