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Post Office Box 5012
Santa Barbara, CA. 93108

October 24, 1983

(Reprinted by permission of the Manchester Guardian Weekly)

THE GUARDIAN, June 5, 1983

Russia has too many problems of its own

The attitude of the American and British Governments towards the Soviet Union is at its... most hostile since the Cold War in the late 1940s and early '50s. To President Reagan the Kremlin is an "evil empire" and to Mrs Thatcher the Russians are "sworn enemies" bent on expansion.

In the eyes of Mr George Kennan, former US ambassador to Moscow this "image of unmitigated darkness" painted by the US Administration is largely of its own making. "There are those in Washington who would argue that this situation flows automatically from the nature of the regime," he said. In this view, Mr Kennan added, the Russians have "an unquenchable thirst for power" that allows no way to reason with them and no language they can understand "other than superior military force".

"This image, if applied 30 or 40 years ago to the regime of Josef Stalin, might not have been far from reality," he said, "but as applied to the Soviet leadership of the year 1983, it is grotesquely overdrawn, a caricature." It was an "inexcusably childish view, unworthy of people charged with the responsibility for conducting the affairs of a great power in an endangered world".

Richard Gott here gives his view of Russia today.

MOSCOW is still one of the remotest destinations for a British traveller. No further than three hours away by jet plane — only as far from London as Agadir — it seems much further away in time. Indeed the holiday companies could well advertise their jaunts as trips in a time machine. For what you get is an astonishing privileged glimpse of the past.

Sometimes the flight seems only to go back three decades, sometimes it travels three centuries. For Russia — this once avant-garde revolutionary experiment, this pole of the superpower Cold War — is probably the most isolated and archaic country in the world.

Modern visitors to Moscow no longer shout "Eureka, I've seen the future and it works". They tend to note quietly that they've seen the past — and are surprised to find that it still functions.

Most people have some idea of what the Soviet Union is like, an amalgam composed part from hearsay, gossip and prejudice, and part from information culled from books and newspapers, and from films and television programmes. But many of us, for much of the time, probably suspend judgment when it comes to assessing the merits or demerits of a revolutionary process that has now been established for well over half a century. Indeed we are rarely called upon to make such a judgment.

Any real debate about the nature of Soviet society, except among very small groups on the extreme left and the extreme right, has been almost wholly absent from British political discussion since the onset of the first cold war in the late 1940s. No one leaps to its defence as they once did — Trotsky's critique of the Soviet Union is now almost universally accepted on the left. And no one really bothers to attack — except (as recently) in the most predictable and ritualistic manner. A fashionable cynicism has been the prevailing tone. We seem to be able to ignore Russia because we have allotted to her the role of permanent adversary.

Yet there is no reason to suppose that this situation will go on for ever. We fought against Russia in the Crimea in the nineteenth century and, briefly, in 1919. But in two world wars in the twentieth century we were on the same side. And in March 1935, less than fifty years ago, Anthony Eden was able to sign a declaration in Moscow, after meeting Stalin, stating that "there is at present no conflict of interest between the British and Soviet governments on any of the main issues of international policy".

No such declaration would be signed today, yet there is no real reason why it could not be. For fundamentally, as Douglas Reed — one of the most perceptive foreign correspondents of the 1930s — pointed out (at a time when British opinion generally was just as anti-Soviet as it is today), "Russia does not want anything that England has . . . Russia has too many troubles, too many problems, too many people, too much territory."

It is a message that the Russians themselves are prone to repeat. Beneath their desire to impress — their emphasis on gigantism — and the need for approval, their real need is much the same as it was when Maxim Litvinov Stalin's foreign minister, explained it to Anthony Eden all those years ago: "We have enough work to do at home to keep us busy for half a century, and it will take us decades to catch up with the rest of the world in technical developments and the standard of life. We do not want to be disturbed . . ."

Half a century later, from several different people in Moscow, I heard exactly the same sentiments expressed. "It is important to mind domestic matters, we should forget about international politics," said one of the leaders of the unofficial peace group. And a couple of senior academics involved in formulating policy towards the Third World remarked on the need for the Soviet Union to retrench. It had no bottomless purse with which to finance the distant poor.

This sense of realism is important for, in spite of its pretensions, Moscow does not feel like the capital city of a superpower. It feels — and officials do not thank you for saying so — more like some Third World country, somewhat forgotten and neglected, with a distinctly provincial tone.

And seen through a Third World perspective, perhaps the Soviet Union has not done too badly — compared, say, with India and China. At least in Moscow the people seem to live well above the breadline. And how do Russia's achievements compare with those of other countries with large populations — with Brazil, say, or Mexico, or Indonesia, or Nigeria? Perhaps not too badly either. Of course official Russia wants to be compared with the United States or with Western Europe, and there the gap — though closing — is laughable.

To anyone from Western Europe, Russia still seems backward, symbolised by the abacus in every shop and stall, which was remarked on even by visitors in the 1930s. Crude, stolid, grim, clumsy — a whole string of adjectives come to mind — though these are not the words one would automatically apply to ballet dancers, to icon painters, to astronauts, or indeed to most of the people one meets and talks to generally.

Yet to anyone from the Third World these paradoxes must seem very familiar. Bread and circuses, and even India and China have the Bomb. At one level there is the intense desire to imitate and copy the patterns of the West — the jeans and Fiat and Pepsi Cola culture — and there are many people who would like to get their hands on all things American. But at another level one is conscious of how isolated Russia still is, how vast numbers of people go about their daily business oblivious of the world beyond — though that, of course, is not solely a Third World characteristic. Superpowers, too, share the phenomenon.

Yet in Moscow you even feel in some sense privileged, as though being able to be present in some long past historical era, to eavesdrop on some ancient civilisation — the Khmer empire or the culture of the Mayas. It is a journey, too, into our own past, for it is a strange sobering experience in the 1980s to be in a non-consumer society, a city without advertisements, and to remember that our own history of consumerism is extremely short-lived.

The real tragedy of the Soviet Union is that it is still striving, however imperfectly, for the construction of an industrial society — about which many in the West are beginning to have doubts. Perhaps, as with the entire development process in the Third World, the Russian revolution will be seen in later centuries to have been some dreadful kind of mistake — wresting the peasants from the land and forcing them into skyscraper polytechnics in the space of little more than two generations. We do not know, but, as a mere contemporary spectator, one can only express wonder at the tenacity with which the experiment has been conducted and continued — and perhaps give silent thanks that some of us live, this side of the time warp, in a more emollient and less abrasive era.

Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.

HABITUAL HATRED—UNSOUND POLICY

Lord Carrington used this year's Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture to make a timely and well-reasoned appeal to the West to take a new approach to East-West relations. He reminded us that:

> The West must be true to its own values. It is the Leninist tradition which is one of conflict and not cooperation.
>
> Our own tradition must be for the peaceful resolution of potential conflict through energetic dialogue. The notion that we should face the Russians down in a silent war of nerves, broken only by bursts of megaphone diplomacy, is based on a misconception of our own values, of Soviet behavior, and of the anxious aspirations of our own peoples.

Americans should pay particular attention to Lord Carrington's sensible advice—for American interests are particularly poorly served, and even endangered, by practices which limit our dealings with the Soviets to the most difficult aspects of our common superpower roles. If you think no spoon is long enough to permit us to sup with the Devil, you should read no further. The premise of this essay is that we must share our planet with a dangerous and despised adversary for the foreseeable future.

That being so, we should seek, at a minimum, to develop some functioning rules for our co-tenancy. To arrive at such an arrangement and to keep it working, we need to explore and maintain the widest variety of contacts, the broadest and most diffuse forms of engagement. Instead of restricting our discussions to the gravest and least tractable problems of arms control, we should be pushing our way down paths of less resistance, looking continually for limited openings, marginal advances, small opportunities to create a measure of understanding and shared interest.

II

It will be weary work. It should not be undertaken with the hope of spinning a restraining net around the Soviet Union. That exercise, attempted a decade ago, failed because it took too little account of the competing forces which shape American foreign policy, and because it assumed that significant areas of Soviet policy at home and abroad could be affected by what we had to offer or withhold in areas of less significance. The policy patronized a nation which wants, almost more than anything else, to be treated by America as an equal. We assumed that Soviet leaders could be made to respond—as we ourselves would not—both to bribes and threats. The idea was unsound. The practice was unconvincing.

A better approach, less illusory in its promise and more manageable in its application, must begin by defining our goals in terms of our ability to attain them, not just in terms of their desirability. From the start we have to rule out policies premised on the imminent collapse of the Soviet empire. Survival in power seems to be the highest good the Kremlin leadership sets itself; much as we may want to see that wish frustrated, and soon, we invite only confrontation if we make the extinction of our adversary our overriding ambition. There may be subtle ways to play on the grave strains within the communist system, and we should not neglect opportunities to do so. But we should expect no more than partial progress on that front, and should not ask either our people or our allies to commit vast energies to an effort certain to be painfully slow and likely to be inconclusive.

At the other extreme we would be foolish to revive either the notion of superpower condominium—never officially admitted but nonetheless feared by others on occasion—or the dream of superpower convergence, a more popular but equally naïve reverie. We have far too many profound conflicts of interest with the U.S.S.R. to suppose that we can bury our disagreements in a joint stewardship of the globe. And beyond the unnatural acts such a pairing would require, we have only to consider the reactions of lesser but still sovereign powers to understand that the idea would not fly in Peoria, or Peking, or Paris.

The other myth has more appeal but no more substance. Yes, we and the Soviets are all human beings, parents, lovers, fellow travelers on "Spaceship Earth." And we have technocrats, bureaucrats and, to a degree, Socrates in common. But the separation of geography, history, culture, political values and socioeconomic systems is vast. We have not yet bridged similar disparities with Mexico. We should not set ourselves the impossible dream of discovering and developing common traits and attitudes in a far more distant and disagreeable climate.

How then do we get through this inevitable marriage of incon-

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venience? Since annulment can come only through mutual annihilation, we have to face the facts presented above and see if, based on a realistic appreciation of both the dangers we face and the limits under which we operate, we cannot keep to the path John Kennedy described 20 years ago, the search to "help make the world safe for diversity." He said then what we should never forget: "We can seek a relaxation of tensions without relaxing our guard. . . . [W]e are willing and able to engage in peaceful competition with any people on earth."

To sustain that competition, we need to be clear in our view of our rival and precise in the formulation of our priorities. Only policies which serve America's long-term interests will command the long-term support of Americans. To be effective in a race that has no defined finish line, we must be as persistent as our rival and, hence, as united by the consent of our people as the Soviets are by compulsion. In the pages that follow I offer an assessment of the Soviet Union recognizable, I hope, to most Americans. And based on that assessment I recommend a renewed effort to engage the Soviet government and—to the extent we can reach it—Soviet society in a protracted but pacific competition based on mutual interests.

III

The official Reagan Administration view of the Soviet Union, precisely and repeatedly stated by the President, has one consistent characteristic: moral conviction. In the course of the 1980 campaign, Mr. Reagan told a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, "[T]he Soviet Union underlies all the unrest that is going on. If they weren't engaged in this game of dominoes, there wouldn't be any hot spots in the world." Almost three years later, in a speech this March to the National Association of Evangelicals, the President urged prayer "for the salvation of all those who live in a totalitarian darkness" but added that until salvation came:

> [L]et us be aware that while they preach the supremacy of the state, declare its omnipotence over individual man, and predict its eventual domination of all peoples of the earth—they are the focus of evil in the modern world. . . .
>
> So in your discussions of the nuclear freeze proposals, I urge you to beware the temptation of pride—the temptation blithely to declare yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault, to ignore the facts of history and the aggressive impulses of an evil empire, to simply call the arms race a giant misunderstanding and thereby remove yourselves from the struggle between right and wrong, good and evil. . . .
>
> I believe we shall rise to this challenge; I believe that Communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest for human freedom is not material but spiritual, and, because it knows no limitation, it must terrify and ultimately triumph over those who would enslave their fellow man.

On April 1, 1983, President Reagan told the Los Angeles World Affairs Council:

> We live in a world in which total war would mean catastrophe. We also live in a world torn by a great moral struggle—between democracy and its enemies, between the spirit of freedom and those who fear freedom. In the last 15 years and more the Soviet Union has engaged in a relentless military buildup, overtaking and surpassing the United States in major categories of military power, acquiring what can only be considered an offensive military capability. All the moral values which this country cherishes—freedom; democracy; the right of peoples and nations to determine their own destiny, to speak and write and live and worship as they choose—all these basic rights are fundamentally challenged by a powerful adversary which does not wish these values to survive. . . .
>
> Today, not only the peace but also the chances for real arms control depend on restoring the military balance. We know that the ideology of the Soviet leaders does not permit them to leave any western weakness unprobed, any vacuum of power unfilled. It would seem that to them negotiation is only another form of struggle. . . .
>
> Generosity in negotiation has never been a trademark of theirs; it runs counter to the basic militancy of Marxist-Leninist ideology. . . .

Such rhetoric is recurrent. At his first White House press conference the President declared that Lenin had established "that the only morality they [Soviets] recognize is what will further their cause—meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that, and that is moral, not immoral. . . . " In the March 8 speech to the Evangelicals, Mr. Reagan specified that "their cause . . . is world revolution." And in Westminster Hall, during a June 8, 1982, address, he spoke of "totalitarian forces in the world who seek subversion and conflict around the globe to further their barbarous assault on the human spirit."

There is too much genuine fervor in these black-and-white depictions of our adversary to permit the suspicion that the President employs them simply to inflame passion and solidify domestic support. His language—even assertions such as the one on October 16, 1981, that the Soviets "have already got their people on a starvation diet of sawdust"—reflects a coherent analysis of Soviet purposes, strengths and weaknesses which is, however, too narrow to translate into any coherent policy beyond sustained confrontation. While President Reagan has managed on several occasions to

state American aims in words meant to dilute the threat of conflict,[1] he is both consistent and insistent in describing the Soviet challenge and ways to meet it in two dimensions: moral and military.

America needs to use a wider lens in order to see the Soviet Union whole. Along with Moscow's "aggressive impulses" we must consider its defensive reflexes, its security obsessions, its self-preservative instincts and the less-than-uniform record of its expansionist conduct. The Kremlin's "evil empire" is also a diverse one, subject to internal strains, economically stagnant, technologically backward and—in Poland and Afghanistan—beleaguered. The Soviet Union today is still recognizable as the land Nikolai Nekrasov apostrophized more than a century ago:

> Wretched and abundant,
> Oppressed and powerful,
> Weak and mighty,
> Mother Russia!

Just as we would not show or recognize America in a monochrome portrait, we should not insist on painting the U.S.S.R. in a single color. It is a nation of 270 million people, but it is also a society in which the death rate per thousand persons rose from 6.9 in 1964 to 10.3 in 1980, where male longevity is dropping, and where the incidence of typhoid is 29 times as high as in the United States. The Soviet Union possesses vast economic potential, but whereas it was the world's second largest economy in 1980, it has slipped now to third place, behind Japan, and ranks sixth in the world by a measure of gross national product per capita that puts the wealth of an average Soviet citizen at less than half that of a Frenchman, and only twice that of a Brazilian. It is a naval power without a warm-water port, a political colossus which must station occupying forces on the territory of its nearest allies, and a revolutionary force

[1] In May 1982, for instance, he said, "I am optimistic we can build a more constructive relationship with the Soviet Union. . . . I have always believed that problems can be solved when people talk to each other instead of about each other. . . ." In London, a month later, he told British parliamentarians, "At the same time, we invite the Soviet Union to consider with us how the competition of ideas and values—which it is committed to support—can be conducted on a peaceful and reciprocal basis." After the speech to the Evangelicals, he told Henry Brandon of the *Sunday Times* of London that "what I was pointing to out there . . . is not the inevitability of war, but a recognition and a willingness to face up to what these differences are in our views and between us to be realistic about it." Then on April 1, in Los Angeles, he said: "To the leaders of the Soviet Union, I say: Join us on the path to a more peaceful, secure world. Let us vie in the realm of ideas, on the field of peaceful competition. Let history record that we tested our theories through human experience, not that we destroyed ourselves in the name of vindicating our way of life. And let us practice restraint in our international conduct, so that the present climate of mistrust can some day give way to mutual confidence and a secure peace."

which abhors the tiniest pressure for uncontrolled change at home. It is, in short, a welter of contradictions.

Those stresses are significant without being—except in some now unforeseeable internal cataclysm—fatal. They work in ways we do not understand to shape the policy universe of the Kremlin leadership and they impose both real choices on those leaders and concrete limits on the choices themselves. What remains fixed in that universe is not the early Utopian goal of world revolution, nor the target Khrushchev set in 1960 of besting the West in economic achievement, but a narrower, less inspiring and still all-consuming priority: the retention of control by the leaders over the people, by the Soviet Union over Eastern Europe and by the Soviet Communist Party over Communist parties it has nurtured in other lands. While the aim can be stated in three parts, its achievement appears to depend more and more on a single instrument: military power, applied directly by the Red Army or indirectly through Cuban proxies, East European surrogates or, under attenuated supervision, terrorist groups.

Thus, what makes the Soviet Union a danger to John Kennedy's hope of a "world safe for diversity," or, in President Reagan's terms, to "all the moral values which this country cherishes," is the Kremlin's conservatism and the armed might which is simultaneously its one reliable support and its most effective expression. The issue for Western policymakers is not the inherent evil of such a system, nor a mythical "master plan" that must be countered. The threat comes not from Soviet dynamism but from the kind of reactionary outlook which gave momentum to Czar Alexander I in constructing and maintaining the Holy Alliance after Napoleon's defeat. We should not fear the giant we face so much as the deformities which cripple all but his sword-bearing arm.

This disproportionate influence of military men and military considerations is the thinly concealed reality of Soviet politics. In Poland even the fig leaf has vanished. In both nations, however, the uneasy occupants of the throne of bayonets face problems to which regimentation and martial discipline provide only stop-gap answers. To retain control—over ambitious rivals in the first place, over a sullenly acquiescent populace in the second—the Soviet leaders must also project a certain degree of dynamism, enough to suppress doubts within the elite, above all, about the inevitability of Soviet progress. Unable to achieve such advances in economic development at home, the Kremlin has been limited to demonstrating and thus reconfirming its power abroad. Soviets do not neces-

sarily pursue that path by preference. Rather, their course has become increasingly a product of restricted choice.

To some extent Western policy is responsible for narrowing Soviet options. The achievement of military parity with the United States more than a decade ago opened vistas of political equality as well, and Moscow's rulers looked to Washington to confer on them the status and legitimacy—in addition to economic stimulus—that would be convincing proof of their success and right to hold power. That bargain was struck first with General de Gaulle and Willy Brandt and, in 1972, with Richard Nixon. By the time it was reconfirmed at the August 1975 signing of the Helsinki Accords, however, the deal was already unraveling. It is worth looking back over the erosion of détente to see why the dike failed and the tide of East-West relations swept away from cooperation.

IV

The record of events is familiar. The "Great Grain Robbery" of 1972 made Americans question the supposed benefits of expanded U.S.-Soviet trade. Moscow's conduct in relation to the Yom Kippur War of 1973 aroused not just a high level of temporary tension but a deep suspicion of Soviet selectivity in the practice of international restraint. The expulsion of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in February 1974 displayed the unchanged face of intolerance in a society Westerners had hoped was mellowing. The Jackson-Vanik and Stevenson amendments adopted at the end of that year confirmed a Soviet view of America's subversive intent.

There followed the 1975 Soviet airlift of Cuban troops into Angola, North Vietnam's triumph in Saigon and expansion into Kampuchea, the Soviet shift to the side of Ethiopia against Somalia, Cuban aid to the radical faction of the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua, the invasion of Afghanistan, and the suppression of Solidarity by the imposition of martial law in Poland. Paralleling and sometimes responding to such developments, the United States showed itself unable to move rapidly from the Vladivostok understandings of 1974 to a SALT II treaty, intensified its courtship of China, cut grain shipments twice (in 1975 and 1980), stepped up the decibel level of its human rights concerns in 1977 to a pitch the Kremlin found intolerable, invited Moscow back into the Middle East peace process and then withdrew the invitation, mounted the boycott of the Olympics to damage Soviet prestige in 1980, curtailed cultural, commercial and consular relations and, under President Reagan, sought not only to conduct a battle of epithets against the Soviet Union but also to strong-arm West Europeans into economic warfare against the oppressors of Poland.

To list the incidents in this spiral is not to analyze the reasons why the bargain of the early 1970s failed nor even to argue that it was an impossible agreement to maintain. The chronicle shows only that détente collapsed, not that failure was inevitable. What it does suggest, however, is that the arrangement did not work because both parties brought to it unreasonable expectations. Soviets assumed that the United States was prepared to accept not just the legitimacy of Communist rule where it already was entrenched but the right to perpetuate that regime unmolested at home and to project its interests as a superpower abroad. Americans appeared to think, instead, that they were obtaining both the leverage to modify internal Soviet behavior, albeit gradually, and Soviet willingness to impose self-restraint in the conduct of foreign affairs. The Kremlin interpreted the deal as a ratification of past Soviet achievements and a *nihil obstat* to their extension. We preferred to read the implied contract as a promise of Soviet evolution toward moderation in all things.

One expectation was held in common. Both Americans and Soviets thought that the injection of Western industrial know-how and capital goods into the Soviet economy would stimulate greater efficiency and modernization of management and attitudes as well as production. Technology, it was believed, would generate not just economic change but sociopolitical reform. No horse could pull such a heavy cart, especially not from behind. The rigidities of Soviet economic planning and practice were too great and too resistant. The manpower, infrastructural and resource deficiencies of the U.S.S.R. could not be overcome or bypassed by improvements in communication or quality control. And the United States, which had helped Stalin's forced-pace industrialization in the 1930s, would not, for political reasons, make the long-term commitments on which Brezhnev's negotiators insisted.

The failure of these hopes, both the conflicting and the shared ones, has left the relationship in a shambles. To the extent that we continue to interact, we have been forced to pursue a single subject—arms control—that is simultaneously the most vital and the most difficult. In a poisoned political atmosphere we have narrowed what might be an extensive range of contacts to a set of limited negotiations more likely to stimulate paranoia and propaganda than progress. To the deformed Soviet giant we speak only of the shackles we would like to place on its one sound limb. And by

addressing a militaristic society only on the strongest ground it occupies, we limit the influence we can have, the alternatives we can pursue.

Without question, arms control is a crucial pursuit. With little question, it is also an area in which the United States and the Soviet Union can formulate their separate interests in a compatible fashion based on their mutual concern to avoid Armageddon. Nevertheless, it is far from being the only potentially productive item on the superpower agenda, and it is at least possible that by exploring other subjects, even marginal ones, we can reduce some of the tension at the center. We would not automatically smooth the way toward stability in our vast nuclear arsenals, but we could make the tough talk about destructive power somewhat easier by setting it within a framework of a broader and possibly more constructive engagement.

V

Such an effort to open and widen our contacts with Moscow has to proceed from a calculation of the American interests it could serve. It cannot be based on the assumptions we found faulty in the first exercise of trying to build better relations. And it must take account of an awkward political fact: the particular barriers we would have to lower are largely ones we raised ourselves, especially in 1980 after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Thus, the first gestures would have to be unilateral American ones, an uncomfortable prospect. To make such actions palatable, we would require not just prearranged Soviet responses in kind but a solid conceptual rationale for reversing course.

The initial price is high. It cannot be discounted by investing in vague hopes of improved mutual understanding. While that is a benefit to seek, even eventually to realize, it is no better ground for a new beginning than was the old illusion that the Soviet appetite for cultural, scientific and commercial exchanges was so large that we could condition their continuation on good Soviet behavior either in emigration or in Africa. Instead, we should try to develop such joint activities for the value they hold for the United States, and be prepared to suspend or drop them when the cost is excessive or the return too low.

The basic test for an agreement to pass is that of America's interest. Are we better served by having a consulate in Kiev than by having no window on the Ukraine? Is our presence in the second largest Soviet republic worth the price: establishing a Soviet consulate in New York, where hundreds of Soviets already work at the United Nations? I would answer in the affirmative to both questions and try to revive the arrangement that was aborted in 1980.

As for the 12 bilateral science and technology exchange accords which date from the Nixon era, there is greater controversy. In the late 1970s, especially, they came under two kinds of attack: the charge that Soviets were using these channels to sweep up American scientific secrets without imparting significant knowledge of their own; and the more demonstrable accusation that trips to American universities and laboratories were doled out only to loyal *apparatchiks*, making us partners in a system that reinforced Party control over Soviet science and diminished real freedom.

To the first complaint, the Americans who had been hosts to Soviet visitors or had been visitors themselves told a National Academy of Sciences review panel in 1977 that the United States "gains a lot scientifically" through the exchange (60 percent), that there should be more joint research (84 percent) and that Soviet visitors included "experts" who "suggested new research procedures, introduced new ideas" and "imparted new knowledge" (80 percent). Assessing the scientists' experiences, the panel concluded that "although American science is, on the whole, stronger than Soviet science, there is still a genuine scientific gain for the United States in having such exchanges. . . . And even in those fields where it is clear that the United States teaches more than it learns, it is important for Americans to know what the Soviets are doing."

On the political issue, Loren Graham of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology noted in 1979, "The exchange programs are presently helping us to learn about repressive conditions in Soviet scholarship and we are able to make more informed decisions about the proper response. . . . If joint programs no longer existed, what would irritated American scientists have to walk out on?"[2]

Of the agreements in operation when Professor Graham wrote, three—an overall protocol on science and technology exchanges, and programs for cooperation in space and in energy research—have lapsed without renewal. Two more, on atomic energy and transportation, are up for renewal this year, and in the remainder—exchanges of graduate students and professors, cooperation between the two academies of science, and activities dealing with the environment, with medicine and public health, with agriculture,

[2] The U.S. scientists' assessments, the Academy of Sciences study conclusions and Professor Graham's views all appear in his paper, "A Balance Sheet in Science and Technology," delivered in May 1979 to a conference sponsored by the International Research and Exchanges Board and published in its booklet, *A Balance Sheet for East-West Exchange*, IREX Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, 1980.

with housing and with world oceans—there are estimated to be only about one-fourth the number of participants there were before 1979. In addition, a long-standing cultural exchange agreement broke down before 1979, although the concert performance by pianist Emil Gilels in New York this spring suggests a Soviet interest in reviving the traffic without, it is hoped, attempting to extract an American pledge to return would-be defectors to Soviet authorities.

Each of the original scholarly exchanges should be examined on its merits. The space accord, which gave us the 1975 Apollo-Soyuz flight—occasionally referred to at the time as the "grain deal in the sky"—probably holds little attraction now, but a number of the others were of benefit once and could be again. American and Soviet scientists were cooperating in cancer research before there was a formal blessing for their work. As the work itself remains important, the blessing should be renewed.

More broadly, we should acknowledge that we need contacts with a widening range of Soviets simply for the insights we can gain through them into their system and the course it is taking. We need such social and political intelligence, far beyond what our diplomats can gather on their restricted rounds, because we need to understand the U.S.S.R. well enough to deal with it steadily. At issue is our self-interest. An unusual reading of our self-interest in giving the Soviets wide exposure to American thinking came from an American mathematician who warns that a decline in Soviet capability in mathematics would threaten U.S. security far more than any exchange program in mathematics. Such a decline, he argues, could leave the Soviet Union unable to appreciate the catastrophic potential of the weapons we and they are able to develop. Nor should we underestimate the subliminal effect exposure to our vast network of superhighways may have on Soviet visitors used to the potholes, pitfalls and perils of the two-lane road linking Moscow with Leningrad. And, as Lord Carrington mentioned in his lecture, "it is worth recalling the impact on [Khrushchev] of the sight of an American grain field."

Mutual understanding, leading to the erosion of Soviet rigidity through the contagion of exposure to freedom, is a distant dream reachable, if at all, by very small steps. "[A]fter 30 years of almost constant interaction," former Senator J.W. Fulbright remarked in 1979, "we have still not made up our minds about what the Russians are really like." We cannot reduce that uncertainty by maintaining an aloof and disapproving distance. We may help ourselves, most of all, by expanding our opportunities to learn more of both the frustrations and pleasures of dealing with Soviets in limited, cooperative ventures.

VI

We can also help ourselves in obvious, economic terms by selling more produce and products to the Soviet Union. Our national interest in such trade, however, cannot be measured simply in the jobs it sustains or the hard currency it moves from Soviet control to our own. Just as there was a strategic justification for restraining commerce throughout the cold war period, there must be a policy rationale for managing its expansion as a means of dissipating confrontation.

Again, old illusions must be discarded. Buckwheat and blue jeans may make communists plumper or prettier, but they will not subvert—indeed, they may reinforce—Party control over Soviet consumers. Nor is dependence on Western imports likely to reach such proportions that threats to stop the flow can be expected to make Moscow reverse its international course or significantly modify its domestic conduct.

While imports now account for roughly 15 percent of Soviet GNP, two-thirds of that volume comes from its socialist allies or from developing nations unlikely to forego sales on a point of political principle. Only for its purchases of food must Moscow rely heavily on a relatively few Western suppliers, but we know from our own 1980 grain embargo exercise that neither American farmers nor Canadian, Argentinian, Australian and European producers are prepared to withhold their supplies from the Soviet market in a period of world grain surplus. And as long as we sell foodstuffs to the invaders of Afghanistan, we lack the moral and political authority to command our allies not to ship bootlaces for military shoes or compressors for natural gas pipelines.

Nonetheless, the profit motive cannot be our only guide to setting U.S.-Soviet trade policy. Such commerce is not politically neutral either in real or symbolic terms, and if we are to incur some costs from trade expansion, we must be clear as well about the political advantages we expect it to bring.

The most immediate benefits would come in our relations with our allies. By moving closer to their outlook, we would diminish a major irritant, narrow an opening the Soviets have been adept at exploiting, and further the chances of implementing an effective common policy of credit and technology controls on Western exports. The discussions before and at the Williamsburg Summit give at most incomplete evidence of such progress. As long as international credit is generally tight, it is easier for all of us to hold East bloc borrowing on a short rein. But we clearly need closer consultation in this area on a permanent basis, so that the "foreign

policy criteria" we have unsuccessfully tried to impose on technology transfer can be incorporated in a different fashion into bargaining with the Soviets simultaneously on economic and political issues.

Within the Coordinating Committee (COCOM) of the Western allies there needs to be an American admission that some goods are more strategic than others. We are now asking COCOM to police such a broad range of high technology that we cannot expect it to act effectively. An alliance agreement to bar export licenses for militarily significant machinery and know-how is in our common interest, but to make it work, we must define military significance in a way that facilitates enforcement rather than invites contempt.

Only over the long term can we expect a stable, growing trade with the Soviets to produce political plusses in the bilateral relationship. Having anticipated too much a decade ago, we should now realize that there are limits to the political price we can extract either from a single deal or continuing commerce. We cannot, however, be certain of the leverage available unless we engage in trade and attempt, in the process, to exert whatever pressure the traffic will bear. Nor, without coordinating an active trade policy with our partners, can we hope to extract the best mix of political and economic terms. For our part, we must begin by questioning the wisdom, in terms of U.S. interests, of continuing to withhold Most Favored Nation status from the Soviet Union when we grant it to almost every country in the world, including several where both free expression and free emigration are denied.

Over a long period of years, trade can open some now-closed doors and minds in the Soviet Union. In the meantime, in commerce as much as in diplomacy, science, scholarship and culture, we should maintain as wide and continuous an effort at broadening our contacts as our own self-interest justifies. To contain Soviet power more positively, we should not isolate ourselves from Soviet society but should seek, instead, to engage it in the most varied ways on the widest of fronts.

VII

Those of us who periodically on his birthday have to read George Washington's Farewell Address to an empty Senate chamber perhaps have more occasion than most to reflect on his broad vision. His counsel in that address is sound policy for all times:

> The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest. Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.

We should be the servants only of the priorities we set for ourselves. Our goal in dealing with the Soviets is to deter conflict, oppose threats to our freedom and our allies, and wait, as patiently as our adversary, for decay within the U.S.S.R. to slow and alter its character and conduct. On the margins, through an expansion of constructive engagements, we may find paths of less resistance along which we can hurry history a bit. The balance to pursue is the one spelled out by Bertrand Russell: "[R]esistance, if it is to be effective in preventing the spread of evil, should be combined with the greatest degree of understanding and the smallest degree of force that is compatible with the survival of the good things we wish to preserve."

In the past—indeed in the present—we have relied too exclusively on force. We would advance our prospects better by seeking, first of all, to understand our opponent and second, where possible, to conclude durable understandings with him.

"Let all the souls here rest in peace,
for we shall not repeat the evil."

—Words on the epitaph of the A-bomb Memorial Cenotaph in Hiroshima.

THE GUARDIAN, June 26, 1983

(Reprinted by permission of the Manchester Guardian Weekly)

Do not force us to become your enemy

by Carlos Fuentes

MORE and more over the past two years I have heard North Americans in responsible positions speak of not caring whether the United States is loved, but whether it is feared; not whether it is admired for its cultural and political accomplishments, but respected for its material power; not whether the rights of others are respected, but its own strategic interests are defended.

These are inclinations that we have come to associate with the brutal diplomacy of the Soviet Union.

But the true friends of your great nation in Latin America — we the admirers of your extraordinary achievements in literature, science and the arts and of your democratic institutions, of your Congress and your courts, your universities and publishing houses and your free press — we will not permit you to conduct yourselves in Latin American affairs as the Soviet Union conducts itself in Central European and Central Asian affairs. You are not the Soviet Union.

We shall be the custodians of your own true interests by helping you to avoid these mistakes. We have memory on our side. You suffer too much from historical amnesia.

Your alliances will crumble and your security will be endangered if you do not demonstrate that you are an enlightened, responsible power in your dealings with Latin America.

Yes, you must demonstrate your humanity and your intelligence here in this house we share, our hemisphere — or nowhere will you be democratically credible.

The mistaken identification of change in Latin America as somehow manipulated by a Soviet conspiracy not only irritates the nationalism of the left. It also resurrects the nationalist fervors of the right — where Latin American nationalism was born in the early 19th century.

You have yet to feel the full force of this backlash, which reappeared in Argentina and the South Atlantic crisis last year, and in places such as El Salvador and Panama, Peru and Chile, Mexico and Brazil.

In the name of cultural identity, nationalism and international independence, a whole continent is capable of uniting against you. This should not happen.

The chance of avoiding this continental confrontation lies in negotiations. Before the United States has to negotiate with extreme cultural, nationalistic and internationalist pressures of both the left and the right in the remotest nations of this hemisphere, Chile and Argentina; in the largest nation, Brazil; and in the closest one, Mexico; it should rapidly negotiate in Central America and the Caribbean.

We consider in Mexico that each and every one of the points of conflict in the region can be solved diplomatically, through negotiations, before it is too late.

There is no fatality in politics that says: given a revolutionary movement in any country in the region, it will inevitably end up providing bases for the Soviet Union.

What happens between the daybreak of revolution in a marginal country and its imagined destiny as a Soviet base? If nothing happens but harassment, blockades, propaganda, pressures and invasions against the revolutionary country, then that prophecy will become self-fulfilling. But if power with historical memory and diplomacy with historical imagination can come into play, we, the United States and Latin America, might end up with something very different: A Latin America of independent states building institutions of stability, renewing the culture of national identity, diversifying our economic interdependence and wearing down the dogmas of two nasty 19th century philosophies.

Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican writer, delivered the commencement address at Harvard earlier this month. This article is adapted from that address.

The longer the situation of war lasts in Central America and the Caribbean, the more difficult it shall be to assure a political solution. The more difficult it will be for the Sandinistas to demonstrate good faith in their dealings with the issues of internal democracy, now brutally interrupted by a state of emergency imposed as a response to foreign pressures. The more difficult it will be for the civilian arm of the Salvadoran rebellion to maintain political initiative over the armed factions. The greater the irritation of Panama as it is used as a springboard for a North American war. The greater the danger of a generalised conflict, dragging in Costa Rica, and Honduras.

Everything can be negotiated in Central America and the Caribbean before it is too late: Non-aggression pacts between each and every state; border patrols; the interdiction of passage of arms, wherever they may come from, and the interdiction of foreign military advisers, wherever they may come from; the reduction of all the armies in the region; the interdiction, now or ever, of Soviet bases or Soviet offensive capabilities in the area.

What would be the quid pro quo? Simply this: the respect of the United States — respect for the integrity and autonomy of all the states in the region, including normalisation of relations with all of them.

The problems of Cuba are Cuban and shall be so once more when the United States understands that by refusing to talk to Cuba on Cuba, it only weakens Cuba and the United States — but strengthens the Soviet Union. The mistake of spurning Cuba's constant offers to negotiate whatever the United States wants to discuss frustrates the forces in Cuba desiring greater internal flexibility and international independence. Is Fidel Castro some sort of superior Machiavelli, whom no *gringo* negotiator can meet at a bargaining table without being bamboozled by him? I don't believe it.

The problems of Nicaragua are Nicaraguan, but they will cease to be so if that country is deprived of all possibility for normal survival. Why is the United States so impatient with four years of *Sandinismo* when it was so tolerant of 45 years of *Somocismo*? Why is it so worried about free elections in Nicaragua, but so indifferent to free elections in Chile? How can we live together on the basis of such hypocrisy?

Nicaragua is being attacked and invaded by forces sponsored by the United States. It is being invaded by counterrevolutionary bands led by former commanders of Somoza's National Guard who are out to overthrow the Revolutionary Guard and reinstate the old tyranny. Who will stop them from doing so if they win? These are not freedom fighters. They are Benedict Arnolds.

Finally, the problems of El Salvador are Salvadoran. The Salvadoran rebellion did not originate and is not manipulated from outside El Salvador. To believe this, is akin to crediting Soviet accusations that the Solidarity movement in Poland is somehow the creature of the United States. (The passage of arms from Nicaragua to El Salvador has not been proved: no arms have been intercepted.)

The conflict in El Salvador is the indigenous result of a process of political corruption that began in 1931 with the overthrow of the electoral results by the Army, and culminated in the electoral fraud of 1972, which deprived the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats of their victory and forced the sons of the middle class into armed insurrection. The Army had exhausted the electoral solution.

This Army continues to outwit everyone in El Salvador — including the United States. It announces elections after assassinating the leadership of the opposition, then asks the opposition to come back and participate in these same hastily organised elections — as dead souls, perhaps?

This Gogolian scenario means that truly free elections cannot be held in El Salvador as long as the Army and the death squads are unrestrained and fuelled by American dollars. Nothing now assures Salvadorans that the Army and the death squads can either defeat the rebels or be controlled by political institutions.

It is precisely because of the nature of the Army that a political settlement must be reached in El Salvador promptly, not only to stop the horrendous death count, not only to restrain both the Army and the armed rebels, not only to assure the young people of the United States that they will not be doomed to repeat the horror and futility of Vietnam, but to reconstruct a political initiative of the centre-left majority that must now reflect, nevertheless, the need for a restructured Army. El Salvador cannot be governed with such a heavy burden of crime.

The only other option is to transform the war in El Salvador into an American war. But why should a bad foreign policy be bipartisan?

The United States can no longer go it alone in Central America and the Caribbean. It cannot, in today's world, practice the anachronistic policies of the "Big Stick". If it does so, it will only achieve what it cannot truly want.

Many of our countries are struggling to cease being banana republics. They do not want to become balalaika republics. Do not force them to choose between appealing to the Soviet Union or capitulating to the United States.

Vol. 129 No. 2 Week ending July 10, 1983

THE GUARDIAN, July 10, 1983 (Reprinted by permission of the Manchester Guardian Weekly)

If only the world were different . . .

LIKE summer migrants they fly in, American officials bent on explaining to European opinion the whys and wherefores of US policy in Central America. Week after week they come, from the State Department, the Defence Department, the White House itself, anxious lest restless Europe should misunderstand the latest nuance in a Presidential statement.

The President, they say, paints with a broad brush. Maybe he raised too much of an alarm with his rhetoric when he first came to power in 1981, scaring his European allies with talk of the Soviet hand at work in the jungles of Central America. And the Europeans certainly were scared, not because there was some truth in the overblown allegations about Soviet (or Cuban) involvement, but because, at most, this seemed but a minor aspect of an unfolding drama with deeply indigenous roots. If the President and his entourage couldn't understand that, they were in for serious trouble. For policy built on a faulty analysis in such a sensitive area could only pile up future difficulties.

Now the argument in Washington has changed. The line from the latest emissaries is that Central America is indeed a complex and sophisticated problem, demanding an ever more careful approach. American policy, it is argued, is well aware of the subtleties of the situation. Nothing is portrayed in black and white any longer, only in infinite gradations of grey. That, at least, is an advance. The President was still hankering last week for a "Soviet-Cuban-Nicaraguan war machine" to explain all, but America, it is now claimed, is not looking for a military solution. It is seeking a political way out.

Economic assistance to the area will be increased, democratic institutions consolidated, military help limited — "the shield behind which reform can go forward" — and the countries in the region itself (the Contadora group) will be encouraged to find solutions to which the United States can give its blessing.

If only. If only the legacy of past history and recent blunders could be dove-tailed into so neat a scheme. If only the surprised recipients in Honduras of fresh dollops of aid knew how to spend it wisely. If only the crazed Pentecostal General in Guatemala could remember that he is supposed to support democracy, not to subvert it in order to cling to power. If only the corrupt colonels in El Salvador could refrain from using their defence shield to bludgeon all opposition to death. If only the supine Mexicans could pull their weight in the region instead of endlessly mouthing diplomatic fatuities.

If only the world were other than it is, this freshly-milled US policy for Central America might receive a more ready hearing in Europe. As it is, in spite of a more sophisticated approach, the same old errors continue to be made. The United States still finds it impossible to believe that it can share the same continent with a government that professes an ideology that it finds deeply repugnant.

While no one in Europe thinks that the Sandinista government in Nicaragua is a regime of well-meaning Social Democrats that could be happily led by Olof Palme or David Owen, it still looks like a government with popular appeal trying to tackle inherited problems of misshapen development with verve and imagination. To insist that it must change direction — and to try to force it to do so by overt economic pressure and covert military action — is both foolish and counter-productive. If Nicaragua's authoritarian or totalitarian trends are accentuated in the coming months, only the United States and the motley crew of Somoza counter-revolutionaries it funds will be responsible.

For the United States administration has still to learn that it cannot coerce the world into its own image, but must live instead with an infinity of unsatisfactory compromises. The crisis in Central America is not yet one of global proportions. Indeed the Soviet Union has rarely made its intentions clearer — that it has no wish to see "a second Cuba" in the Americas. There is still time for opinion in Western Europe to be thrown in the balance against those who will soon be arguing for an increased military commitment. Even in the United States itself there are important voices — in the churches and elsewhere — that the US administration could listen to.

But time is running out. American policy is now on the escalator. It will gradually cease to be formulated in Washington, and will twist and turn at the whim of some Central American general, as news comes in of some fresh military reverse or imminent coup. Unless a fresh appraisal is made soon of where current initiatives are leading, minor errors in what was once an obscure and irrelevant region will explode into a crisis that — quite apart from other ramifications — will drive a new wedge between Atlantic allies.