

Europe Under a Pax Sovietica ?

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The New Europe would unite military power with economic strength. It would emerge as a global superpower at a time of danger and uncertainty. It would constitute a marketplace of 780 million people that stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals.

NEW YORK. - Some days ago, France's most influential daily, *Le Monde*, published an editorial stating that the good idea to emerge from the current French presidential election campaign is the creation by Western Europe of a Marshall Plan for the Soviet satellite states. The editorial concluded that Europe should be "enlarged to the East."

The proposal is in harmony with General Secretary Gorbachev's public statements. In his book, he writes: "Europe is our common home"; "It is only together, collectively, and by following the sensible norms of coexistence that the Europeans can save their home, protect it..."; "the idea of a common European home finds understanding among political and public figures of not only Eastern but also Western Europe ... thus Foreign Minister Genscher of Federal Germany has declared a readiness to 'accept the concept of a common European home and to work together with the Soviet Union so as to make a really common home' ; ... other leaders have spoken to me in the same vein."

It is probable that to further such a concept, and within a few years, the Soviet and American leaders will meet in Berlin with the heads of the two Germanys. The Soviets will announce the removal of the Berlin Wall and the withdrawal of their troops from East Germany; the U.S. will announce a counterbalancing withdrawal from West Germany - another form of the double zero option. Conversations will begin on the ways to reunite East and West Germany.

Building a Protectorate

All this will give the impression of symmetry. But those who care to look under the surface will see that the reality is different. For U.S. troops to return, a major political act will be required. For Soviet troops to return, a few airplanes will be required. The U.S. will have pulled out of Europe; the Soviets will have achieved their two principal tactical objectives: the decoupling of Europe from the U.S., and the de facto neutralization of Germany pending the outcome of purposefully protracted talks on theoretical reunification. Without West German participation, Europe is unable to mount a credible defense system.

Let us analyze such an event from a number of perspectives. The Soviets realize that their political system makes it impossible for their industry to compete with those of the free enterprise societies. In a rapidly changing world, only a decentralized economy subjected to the forces of the free market can innovate and compete. Even Mr. Gorbachev's economic mentor, Abel G. Aganbegyan, says it will take 20 to 30 years for reforms to have a deep impact on Russia's economy. So the Soviets are condemned to build on their strength, not their weaknesses. Their strength is military. If they are able to form a New Europe, decoupled from the U.S., then they have a chance of using their military superiority to gain economic strength before their own society decomposes. They would contribute to the New Europe their military power. Western Europe would contribute its industrial and financial infrastructure. This time the Soviets would seek to avoid the mistakes they made when they acquired their Eastern European empire. They would realize that total subjugation is incompatible with economic productivity, so they would attempt to bring stability by creating a protectorate rather than a colony.

The proposal would be that the New Europe would be strong and independent. It would unite military power with economic strength. It would emerge as a global superpower at a

time of danger and uncertainty. It would constitute a marketplace of 780 million people that stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals. It would be a community of Europeans with a common heritage. And the New Europe would bathe in the stability of Pax Sovietica.

For Europeans, there would be much to commend this proposal. Europe will be the principal direct victim of the devaluation of the American dollar. For so long as the dollar was overvalued and the U.S. was irrigating the world with a massive trade deficit, Europe could tolerate the consequences of its industrial faults. But now, it has to face three new challenges. Exporting profitably to the U. S. will become progressively more difficult; the U. S. will be able to export more readily to Europe; and Europe will be considered by the Pacific nations as the soft underbelly of the world economy. They will target the European markets to replace the profits that they will forgo in attempting to maintain their market share in the U.S.

In such circumstances, the Soviet bloc would be perceived as a privileged marketplace for Western Europe's goods, which would relieve its economic pain.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that Europeans would make the sacrifice needed to build a credible defense system. Sheltering under the U.S. nuclear umbrella, they have become accustomed to protection. If they lose confidence in their existing protector, they will be tempted to seek another.

When they look to America, they will see a nation deeply divided, a nation which is questioning its traditional values. Such a nation tends to withdraw from a world role and turn inward. And they can read the recent Ikle report on "Discriminate Deterrence" and receive confirmation that commitment to the defense of Western Europe is no longer a top U.S. priority. They can see that even on its own continent America's allies are trembling.

In the Pacific, Europeans would see Japan emerging as the dominant world economic power. Japan's problem is the mirror image of that of the Soviets. Whereas the Soviets must convert military supremacy into economic power, Japan must convert economic supremacy into military power. There are many who will question the relevance of the figures usually cited on Japan's, defense spending, i.e., 1 % of Gross National Product. But let me quote from a January issue of *The Economist*: "Defense spending measured in dollars will be higher in Japan in the fiscal year starting in April than in any other nation, except America and Russia ... " "The current program expires in 1990 ... its successor. .. will raise spending on defense considerably." There seems little doubt that Japan could aim at leapfrogging current military technology.

Against such a backdrop, the New Europe could become a reality and could lead to a strong protectionist barrier being erected around the whole of continental Europe, including the Soviet bloc. Britain would probably attempt to detach itself and find a role somewhere between that of Hong Kong and Japan vis-a-vis their mainland.

The initial reaction of America might be positive. The removal of the Berlin Wall along with the mutual withdrawal of troops would be hailed as another step toward world peace. So would Soviet concentration on its major strategic objectives and the consequent withdrawal from peripheral geographic commitments inherited from previous waves of expansionism. Also the reduced U.S. financial contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would be welcomed. But European protectionism would be interpreted as economic aggression. In such a climate, it is impossible to discard the notion of the emergence of a protected North American common market. Such a market would include the U.S., Canada and, progressively, Mexico. Mexico could not be excluded because economic and political turmoil in that nation would transform the demographics of the U.S. The North American market would consist of 350 million people and would represent roughly a third of the world's GNP. For a number of years it could turn inward with relative comfort.

America's Stumble

The current fashion is to believe that a nation's greatness depends on its material wealth. As with most fashionable ideas, it is wrong. A nation's strength depends on its will, its pride and its principles. It needs a leader who incarnates the nation's values and galvanizes its people to act in accordance with them. Recent history proves this over and over again. In 1958, France was on its knees. It was on the brink of chaos. De Gaulle acceded to office and returned pride to his people. Prosperity followed. In the late 1970's, Britain looked as though it was in terminal decline. Mrs. Thatcher alone, in conflict even with most of her colleagues in government, personally turned her country around. She did not fall into the trap of compromising fundamental principles so as to receive the approval and easy popularity of those who had been infected with the very ideas she was combating. Today, you can feel pride and confidence returning to Britain.

President Reagan took office at a time of American self doubt. Vietnam, Watergate, the Iran hostage crisis, the economic slump, all contributed to the perception that America had been gripped by a suicidal urge. During his early years in office, Mr. Reagan changed all that. Pride returned. America fulfilled its most important role, that of being an example to the world. Democracy, individual freedom, free enterprise began to return to favor. There was a great surge of enthusiasm and optimism. America had come back. And then, tragically, perhaps weakened by his illness, Mr. Reagan threw away his compass in exchange for a platter of easy popularity. Once again, America, which for most of the century has been the guardian of world freedom, would look like a confused bull having difficulty in distinguishing between right and wrong, friends and enemies, short term and long term national interests, between the superficial perception and the fundamental reality.

Now only strong leadership in America and Europe with an unerring sense of mission will be able to maintain a Western alliance of free and independent nations. The alternative will be the emergence, after the turn of the century, of two superpowers: Soviet Europe and Japan's Pacific. To be sure, the North American common market would be a large and no doubt prosperous marketplace, but it would cease to be a major geopolitical factor. And the world would be a sadder and more dangerous place as a result of America's withdrawal.