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From the Publisher

by

Robert J. Murray

This issue of the *Naval War College Review* is devoted to the conference on "Security Policy in an Insecure Age," held in Newport from 12 to 15 May 1982, and sponsored by the Center for Naval Warfare Studies.* The conference was not concerned with naval issues *per se* but with the strategic context within which future naval issues must fit. The conference discussed strategic circumstances between now and the end of the century, and we publish here the papers written by some of the distinguished scholars and public servants who took principal roles in the conference.

In these papers we do not see, by century's end, a world fundamentally different from the present one: no dramatic changes in East-West relations, no breakups of the Western Alliance, no technological revolutions of the atom-splitting kind. It is, after all, as one author notes, a shorter distance to the year 2000 than we have already traveled from the end of World War II.

If the future promises much that is familiar, it also promises a full measure of problems and opportunities. In particular, we must face up to the implications of nuclear parity for Alliance strategy. Nuclear superiority is no longer a practical goal for either side, foolproof defense against nuclear attack does not seem to be in the cards, and nuclear war on any scale risks the destruction of civilization. Will it continue to be safe for the Alliance to place as much weight as it now does in its strategy on the threat of nuclear war in response to Soviet aggression? The answer is, "no."

The military strategy of the Nato Alliance is in need of repair. The nuclear edge is beyond recapture and the Soviet Union has been outproducing us in conventional arms for nearly two decades. What is to be done? There is the possibility for getting much more out of Nato defense spending if we would only cooperate rather than duplicate. This means making deals, so that the burdens of the Alliance are fairly shared. Such deals ought not to be beyond the wit of the leaders of our alliance.

The Soviet Union is militarily strong and politically weak in Europe, and this is a danger. Outside Europe, it has pursued a foreign policy that encourages and benefits from instability. Changes will be coming in Soviet leadership. How should we deal with the Soviet Union? There are different answers in Europe and the United States, the latter favoring, at the moment, a posture of confrontation, and the former preferring policies that would, somehow, give the Russians a greater stake in a peaceful Europe.

*For a description of this new organization, see "The Center for Naval Warfare Studies" on pages 92-94 of this issue.

What policies are we to pursue in the Third World? How do we help promote constructive change in states economically weak and often politically volatile? There is speculation that the East-West confrontation will give way to a North-South struggle, but this looks very unlikely to our authors. The differences between East and West are too far-reaching to permit early reconciliation, and the southern nations are too weak and too divided to organize effectively against northern nations. There will, however, be great competition for resources—capital, trade, and investment—needed by developing nations, and this provides an opportunity, if we can seize it, to develop more cooperative relationships and support constructive change. There is a need for Western attitudes, policies, and practical assistance that will facilitate change without opening the opportunity for “Communist-inspired” revolutionary assistance.

These are some of the issues discussed at the Conference and in the following pages. They are among the issues affecting our future, and we commend them to your reading. We welcome your comments.

