

Sept. 20th.

Impressions regarding the discussions at the Oxford conference
of the International Institute for Strategic Studies:

The main impression I am taking away from this conference is an impression of total and global drift. I have for some time the impression that the United States is afflicted by a paralysis of the political will or to put it differently, its political system is incapable to come to grips with the complexity of the problems it faces domestically and internationally and together. And that it will take a long time before it will be able to do so. The discussions in Oxford also made clear that the USSR's capability to , first, understand what is happening, even within their own terms and their capacity to deal with what they think is happening in the world, is very inadequate to say the least, and most likely completely irrelevant. The Soviet Union seems to be in the grip of internal bureaucratic dynamics which controls and limits its adaptive and capability to a change environment, and a very rapidly/fundamentally changing environment at , as well as the political decision making mechanism which has very much limited the range of choice that is open to it for a successor of Brezhnev, but also one which makes sure that the new guy will not have enough power and authority as a result of which he and the new regime will most likely be extremely chauvinistic and rather ruthlessly pragmatic and effective in changing the power structure to suit their own needs to stabilize their power.

In the second level of analysis, again in many ways like the incapacity of the US economy to adjust to new requirements, for instance, with regard to energy conservation and to deal with its inflation and unemployment and to maintain an adequately high growth rate , the Soviet Union is suffering/similar, although not all together, similar incapacity. The projections are for a slower growthrate, a dependency around the 1985 for oil imports, which will create a new ball game by itself, and population

trends which favor a much larger population increase of Asian-Soviet Union rather than the Russians. What will this do to the internal stability to the nationality's problem etc. remains of course to be seen.

If we put all this against the background of a changing world, a world that is not changing in one direction but world that is changing as a result of the collapse of colonial domination in Africa, of the collapse of ~~the~~ traditional and semi-traditional neo-traditional developmental traditional power structures throughout the middle east and Africa, it is meaningless in terms of the real significance of what is happening in this regard to only look off which change, which collapse, benefits whom. I have the feeling that we are in the grip of processes of change which in the first place we barely understand, we really don't know the forces that are at play, let alone the longer term interaction of such forces with the existing patterns of power, and we also observe that no one, including both super powers, really have any control over these processes. Yesterday, someone talked about the Islamic radicalization, the role of the new Islamic fundamentalism. I think it is important to point out that that is only one of the phenomena that is ~~beginning~~ beginning to show itself in the religious field. What is taking place in my view is a reaction to modern development concepts, be they of their left or of their right as they have been formulated and tried in the 1950's and 1960's, and in the 1970's. Now one of those reaction patterns is fundamentalistic and we find them in many of these countries, including in my own and Malaysia, and let us say the Islamic countries, or countries with large Islamic population, East or West. But there are also manifestations of a renaissance which is not religious renaissance which is not in itself hostile to modernity and to science and technology. What we are witnessing is essentially a moral rejection of the commercialism the greed that is generally accompanied by development, or at least

so it is perceived. What lies behind this is, a manifestation that Islam has been touched in its deepest core by the development process and wants to reassert the societal capacity for morality, moral judgement etc. In fact, events of this kind have let me speculate about ~~xx~~ whether we are not witnessing through all the chaos and self destructiveness and divisions, whether we are not witnessing the beginning of a rise of a new Islamic civilisation. The point will be made that these Arabs countries and the other Islamic countries are all divided among themselves, they all have problems etc.

I wonder if we look for a moment at European history during the Elizabethan period and the period of the European expansion across the globe. That was a process which was not predicated on any sense of unity of Europe. In fact, it were divisions and a degree of competition in the world which led ^{to} this tremendous outburst of energy and expansionism.

Rather than to continue speculating, there are some very basic questions ~~xxxx~~ that we will have to ask the Sovietologists.

One is, how does the Soviet perceive the significance of the change that are taking place? Are they still looking at those changes in terms of a process ~~xxxx~~ ^{which} will lay the foundation for a socialist or rather communist/global order? How do these changes and the crumbling of empires and national power structures jibe with their dependency on some

reasonably operating international economic system? Do they perceive the world to be ⁱⁿ the beginning of a new revolutionary phase, only delimited by a nuclear strategic calculus?

Are there the beginnings of a new attempt to synthesize all this into new major concepts of philosophy of history?

That is to say an adaptation of the next step after the Leninist concept of imperialism and the braggadocio about the competition with the West?

The second set of questions pertains to the West.

What are the perceptions of the Soviet Union in the Soviet

with regard to the Western's capacity and will to respond to sudden changes in the power structure, do they see it as important that the competition in utilizing new opportunities do not threaten detente. Are they considering a change in the terms of in which detente is seen and wage. I am of course aware of the different interpretations of detente in both the US and the Soviet Union. Where do they see the limits within which detente remains a viable concept, ^{that} ~~which~~ is to say within which problems of the attempts at reaching nuclear arms control and some stability in the relationship between the two super powers is going to be endangered. And are they willing to pay that prize? It would seem to me the most important problem here is, are there miscalculations that the Soviet Union is making in terms of Western response capacity and willingness which can be only the redress at some point by Western application of power, that is war. This I think is the fundamental question and I would very much like to see some of our Sovietologists address at some of these questions.