The Challenge of Power Politics

"A WORLD WITHOUT armaments, a world without wars"—this was the attractive slogan Nikita Khrushchev advanced at one time. It expresses the aspirations of the foremost thinkers in history. But so far it has never been realized. If it were, of course, the entire international community would benefit in every way.

Perestroika, taking into account the new realities, returned to this exceptionally important subject. The new thinking approached it from two angles. It emphasized, on the one hand, the inadmissibility of a nuclear war and its deadly consequences as well as the need to renounce military methods in general as a means of resolving conflicts. On the other hand, it acknowledged that rational goals could not be achieved by the use of force but only by renouncing power politics. In a word, a transition had to be made to a nuclear-free world and a world without violence, as the leaders of the Soviet Union and India stated in the celebrated New Delhi declaration of November 1986.

We know that other viewpoints exist, up to and including outright justification of war as an inevitable evil rooted in the very depths of human nature—an evil that the human race can never eliminate.

This assumption may seem to be confirmed by history. The facts are well known, testifying that over thousands of years the earth has known only a few that were completely free of war. And why even speak of thousands of years? The period from 1945 to 1991 alone saw approximately 150 different wars and armed conflicts (depending on how these calculations are made). Approximately 7.2 million soldiers died in these conflicts. That ignores civilian casualties, the wounded and the crippled. Of the approximately twenty-four hundred weeks after 1945, when World War II ended, only three weeks have been completely free of war.

The parade of wars has not ended to this very day. Does that mean, though, that things will always be this way? It is not a simple question; the tradition of power politics and of solving problems by armed force is deeply rooted in the consciousness of individuals and entire nations. It is impossible to uproot these traditions all at once.

Nevertheless, there is hope based on real facts, the same facts that underlie the new thinking. They are as follows:

- There is an ever wider recognition of the exceptionally destructive nature of modern warfare (especially when nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction are used), and that modern weapons can cause irreparable damage not only to the defeated side but to the victorious side as well.
- There is the fact that the ideological-political and military-political division of the world into opposing blocs has been overcome. It is this division that has continually fed the danger of nuclear holocaust.
- Although the rivalry between the great powers was a major factor in the outbreak of two world wars, today economic differences between countries are being resolved by political as well as economic means. The rivalry continues but remains on the level of technology, productivity, and the capacity to be competitive on the world market.
- With the elimination of colonial empires, the struggle between the colonizers and the colonies has been removed as a source of military conflicts. Disputes between the colonizers and the former colonies continue and are sometimes quite sharp (as we have discussed). Here, too, the former colonial masters tend to use economic and political methods of compulsion rather than arms.
- The last several decades have seen gradually accumulating experience in peacefully resolving conflicts. Efforts in this area have proceeded with difficulty, but there is increasing understanding of the need to extend this experience and persistently use it.

These factors are the basis for hope that traditional power politics can be uprooted. Countervailing trends are also apparent, however. One trend is the revival of aggressive nationalism, the sharpening of national and ethnic conflicts, as discussed above. Although they usually begin within the borders of a particular country (thus far at any rate), they potentially can spread across borders and become conflicts between nations. It is not impos-

sible that large-scale social conflicts could arise, especially in developing countries (for example, Mexico). John Kenneth Galbraith does not exclude the possibility of such conflicts breaking out in the developed countries as well. What is involved here are potential conflicts between marginalized elements in society—the "underclass," as Galbraith calls them—and those who are employed or well-to-do. Such conflicts can begin within national borders but cause international complications.

In a number of cases, including in Europe, certain territorial or national claims have been made by one country against another. The greater number of such conflicts have emerged in the developing world. Let us recall, as one example, the border war between Peru and Ecuador.

A number of political scientists and politicians suggest that the intensifying contradiction between the wealthy countries of the North and the poor countries of the South can lead to military conflicts. In this connection, they point to the danger of the spread of nuclear weapons slipping out of control and to the number of countries on the verge of gaining nuclear capability or already making nuclear weapons. Recent events in India and Pakistan illustrate this point.

Still another factor that may tend to provoke or increase the danger of new wars is the unceasing arms race in the South. Many poor countries, in contrast to the developed countries, have increased military spending in recent years, instead of reducing it. Iran, for example, according to SIPRI statistics, increased its spending for military purposes between 1992 and 1995 by 42.5 percent—Pakistan by 19.5 percent and Saudi Arabia by 12.92 percent. These military buildups are encouraged by the North's efforts to expand arms sales, which are motivated, in turn, by commercial interests and sometimes by political considerations as well.

In the most advanced countries, beginning with the United States, efforts are under way to develop new kinds of weapons, including electronic, psychotropic, and others, based on principles that differ fundamentally from "classic" models. "There remain fewer and fewer chances for an era of disarmament to set in after the Cold War," the German magazine *Stern* wrote recently. "For the weapons manufacturers, the years of stagnation are coming to an end, when military budgets and arms exports were shrinking."

Thus humanity is approaching the beginning of the twenty-first century under conditions in which wars still occur, the sources of wars persist, and the arms race continues, although it has cooled somewhat since the termi-

nation of the East-West conflict. At the same time the chances of preventing wars are increasing.

In short, the challenges of power politics and potential warfare persist—and so does the life-and-death importance of these challenges.

Under these conditions, the question of universal security is becoming increasingly important, along with ways and means of assuring it. The approaches to this question worked out by the new thinking retain their significance. They also require further development, taking into account changes in the situation that have occurred and are emerging. Given the current interdependence between nations, security can only be thought of as security in common. Economic, ecological, and social aspects have become extremely important organic components of the general conception of security. Guaranteeing security is closely linked today with the maintenance of stability both within nations and within regions.

Of course what we have said here does not exhaust the complex subject of security and the particular features this problem has acquired in our time. The need for strengthening universal security and maintaining peace makes it highly desirable and important that a whole range of measures be carried out.

First, the threat of nuclear military conflict must be completely eliminated. The removal of this danger would strike a substantial blow against power politics in general and against the widespread power politics mentality. The measures necessary to achieve this goal in general are well known. But it is worth restating the main measures and in some cases adding to them on the basis of recent experience. What is primarily involved, it seems, are the following measures:

- It is necessary to continue the actual reduction of the nuclear capability of the United States and Russia, both countries having begun this process. But in the near future the other nuclear powers—China, Britain, and France—should be urged to join in this process; a special agreement should be concluded among the five nuclear powers on procedures for reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons.
- The complete cessation of nuclear testing, which began in 1996, should be accompanied by measures to make more rigorous the system preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons, up to and including tough sanctions carried out through the United Nations against violators.

- It is important to create, under UN supervision and with participation by the International Atomic Energy Agency, an effective worldwide system on the earth's surface, in the atmosphere, and in outer space for monitoring preparations for the military use of nuclear power.

Certain agreements that have already been reached must be implemented under strict international supervision. These are agreements on the prohibition and destruction of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. The possibility exists that these agreements may be violated—that is, some countries may produce such weapons of mass destruction and even attempt to use them. The problem of how to implement strict monitoring and sanctions in cases of violation is still a significant one.

Conventional weapons represent a special problem. The modern forms of these weapons have achieved such qualities that they are comparable to weapons of mass destruction (although on a territorial scale they do not inflict comparable damage). There are other kinds of weapons being produced that have been termed *nonlethal* in American military terminology. Some of them, for example, jamming or putting out of commission the opponent's means of communication and information, the development of substances taking the form of a lather or foam that interferes with the movement of enemy military equipment, and electronic and electromagnetic devices that interrupt enemy communications or power supplies, can truly be called nonlethal. Other so-called nonlethal weapons do significant damage to human health or incapacitate people altogether. All this requires, it seems, new approaches to the problem of conventional weapons. It would probably be appropriate to begin a worldwide dialogue on setting qualitative limits for further improvement or refinement of conventional weapons, however difficult this might be to achieve.

In Europe a treaty is in effect for reducing the number of troops and weapons. Experience regarding this treaty, despite all the difficulties that have arisen, is quite positive. If it were extended to other regions or continents, such a step could only be welcomed.

Perhaps it would be expedient in cases where neighboring states were agreeable to try to establish zones—even of limited extent at first—in which the number of weapons permitted would be lowered or reduced to a minimum. Examples of countries that have taken this road include New Zealand and Costa Rica. They get along quite well without being armed to the teeth

and maintain only a minimum number of instruments of destruction. Their example is an object lesson and a model for others to follow.

Arms exports, especially to the developing countries, constitute a serious problem. It is understood that such exports bring large profits to the arms manufacturers as well as to the governments of the exporting countries. It is hard to relinquish large profits. But the export of arms consistently feeds the danger of new conflicts and nourishes the activity of extremists of all kinds, including international terrorists, not to mention the effect this has on the economic development of countries spending large sums to purchase these arms.

In the long term it would be important in general to stop arms exports or at least to reduce them to a certain level established by international agreement. As for arms exports to regions where armed conflicts are under way, they should be banned outright. Illegal arms exports should be made the equivalent of international terrorism and drug trafficking. I would support in every way the initiative taken by the former president of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, regarding the establishment of a system to control the arms trade.

Considering recent political trends and the world situation, it would be entirely possible to coordinate the intelligence services of permanent members of the UN Security Council (and over the long term possibly include other democratic governments) to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, and the illegal arms trade. Arms manufacturers understandably would not agree to this proposal. The international community, it would seem, has the necessary level of maturity to take up the long-term task of conversion from military to civilian production, the reorganization of a substantial part of military industry for civilian production (and later the overwhelming majority of military plants). In the twenty-first century the human race should not live armed to the teeth. It should prepare to live peacefully, to use the money that formerly went to military spending in order to respond to such challenges of our times as the environmental, energy, and food crises.

From a dispassionate study of the experience of recent times in the Mideast, Africa, Southeast Asia, the former Yugoslavia, and the Caucasus region, we should conclude that special agencies can be established under the UN and regional organizations for security and cooperation to prevent or stop regional conflicts through diplomacy but also, if necessary, by economic and military means.

An important task is to establish mutual understanding and cooperation in regions of the world that could be called border regions between civilizations—for example, the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and the Mideast. It is especially in these areas that conflicts have arisen in the past and present. It is not excluded that such conflicts will continue to arise in these areas over the long term. Special efforts by the European and international communities are required in these areas, along with an especially attentive attitude and effective preventive diplomacy. In the long term, what is needed is the energetic development of peaceful interaction of all kinds among the peoples and countries in these border regions between civilizations.

These are absolutely necessary steps in my opinion, and if they are taken, the accent can be shifted from forceful methods of conducting policy to peaceable and civilized methods. Thus far, unfortunately, no desire to move in this direction is noticeable. That is why today we observe a kind of backward movement, a regression into an atmosphere more typical of the past.

Concerned about this, the International Foundation for Socioeconomic and Political Science Studies in Moscow, the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in New Delhi, and the Gorbachev Foundation in the United States (San Francisco) have jointly submitted to the UN a program of global security. The program has four parts: nuclear disarmament, reduction of conventional weapons under reliable supervision, strengthening regional security structures, and the prevention and resolution of conflicts (with the participation of special groups from the general public, a commission of the General Assembly, and a proposed body of political observers and intermediaries, as well as the participation of an institution for the study and prevention of conflicts).

A topic I cannot avoid touching on is security in Europe. It hardly needs to be demonstrated how important peace on this continent is for global security—history itself is ample evidence of this. But the present situation in Europe cannot be considered favorable. Not too long ago Europe faced a dramatic choice: to continue along the fatal path of confrontation or to radically change course and move toward new, good neighborly relations among the countries of Europe. This choice was made collectively, and a historic turning point was reached. A summit conference in Paris in November 1990, it seemed, had laid the basis for new relationships and a new European policy and formulated its principles.

Today Europe once again faces a choice: to continue to pursue the course outlined in Paris or for each country to withdraw to its own regional neigh-

borhood and return to some extent to the fragmentation characteristic of the past. In other words, will there be a greater Europe that is truly united, whose interests are becoming increasingly integrated, or will it be a sum total of smaller Europes, weakly connected with and even hostile to one another?

It is true that in recent years much has changed in Europe, especially since the end of the East-West confrontation. Europe's political geography has undergone a significant evolution, as has the situation in various other regions. But in our view, these changes do not in any way cancel the principles defined in Paris.

But these principles are not really working. Or if they are, it is only to a slight degree, since we still see military conflicts within Europe (in the former Yugoslavia and in the Caucasus region). The danger of a new division of the continent has arisen with NATO's expansion to the East, which will inevitably encourage military preparations in a number of countries on the continent.

The Paris principles require continent-wide cooperation, along with improvement of existing mechanisms and the creation of new ones for policies applying to Europe as a whole.

There is already a continent-wide organization in Europe—the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), which continues to perform the functions for which it was founded in 1975. But it has not yet fully adapted to Europe's needs or to the new situation in which it finds itself. Many useful passages are found in the documents adopted by this organization, but some are ignored and others simply cannot be implemented as the organization does not have the necessary institutional means.

A further institutionalization of the OSCE is obviously needed, particularly the establishment of a Security Council. I have argued for this idea for many years. The council would be concerned with preventing conflicts and extinguishing them when they break out. How to establish such a council and what functions to assign it is a matter for all the member states of the organization to decide. But such an agency must exist. And it must exist as a Europe-wide agency closely linked with the UN Security Council.

As long as no such body exists, NATO will keep trying to assume its functions. But NATO is incapable of performing those functions in view of the aims and purposes for which it was created. It is true, as I have said, that certain changes have taken place in NATO. A council for cooperation in which most European countries participate has been established. A document concerning mutual relations, cooperation, and security has been signed between

Russia and NATO. The Berlin session of the NATO Council devoted special attention to enhancing the role of all the countries of Europe within the framework of NATO's structure (although no noticeable results are apparent along these lines). NATO's functions are being politicized, but this is happening very slowly and the process of NATO's transformation is far from complete. If NATO were transformed in accordance with the new conditions, it could perform certain useful functions in Europe without conflicting with the OSCE or genuine Europe-wide cooperation in one form or another.

Unfortunately, events in spring 1999 showed that NATO, for the time being, is following quite a different course. The war it unleashed against Yugoslavia in March 1999 means, first of all, that this alliance, which was established as a *defensive organization* for the protection of its members, according to the treaty signed in Washington in 1949, has gone over to offensive operations beyond the bounds set by that founding treaty.

Second, this war provides evidence that the United States, which plays a commanding role in NATO, is willing not only to disregard the norms of international law but also to impose on the world its own agenda in international relations and, in fact, to be guided in world relations solely by its own "national interests," taking the United Nations into account only if UN decisions and actions serve U.S. interests.

Third, NATO policy, as in the Cold War years, is placing primary emphasis on supremacy in military power, as well as the threat of employing that power and the actual use of superior military force.

In April 1999 NATO adopted a new strategic conception. It speaks, to be sure, about the role of the UN, along with other international organizations. But at the same time declarations were made at the highest level that NATO was prepared to act wherever it wished and however it wished, if it considered that necessary, without any UN resolutions.

NATO's new strategic conception, approved at the NATO summit meeting in Washington, as well as NATO's actual conduct in the Balkan crisis, showed that the decisive role in determining the destinies of the European continent would be assigned to NATO, rather than to the OSCE.

The war against Yugoslavia—the first war in Europe since World War II—sets a significant precedent indicating the direction of the new American strategy. The war began with a great deal of fanfare about preventing a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo. There is no question that the policies and actions of President Milosevic toward the Albanian minority in

Yugoslavia deserve condemnation and a response on the part of the international community.

But this should be done only with the knowledge and consent of the United Nations and under UN auspices. In violation of this generally recognized principle of international law, NATO engaged in a massive armed assault on a sovereign country. The heavily concentrated bombing of Serbia created, on top of the Kosovo catastrophe, a humanitarian, ecological, and social catastrophe throughout Yugoslavia, a European country of long standing. Such neighboring countries as Albania and Macedonia, and perhaps others, are being drawn into the orbit of this tragedy. The situation in the region as a whole is explosive.

It will hardly be possible to restore Europe and the world to the status quo that existed before March 23, 1999. The actions of the United States and NATO prompt everyone—and Europeans, first of all—to reflect deeply on American policy on the eve of the new century. It has become evident that Washington has not been able to elaborate a strategy that is adequate to the challenges of our time or to the position of the United States itself in a world that has been renewed.

The viability and future of the North Atlantic alliance itself have been called into question. Without NATO the United States could hardly carry out its highly dangerous and destructive new course, either in the world arena or in Europe alone. NATO consists above all of the European countries—with their more profoundly democratic and humanistic culture. This culture, together with a very rich experience of many centuries of dramatic and sometimes bloody history, especially in the twentieth century, is incompatible with policies involving the crass and unceremonious use of force. The grumbling, the stir of dissent against the actions of the United States, which can be heard in European circles of the most varied kind, as well as in other countries of the Americas, is a symptom that the White House would do well to think about seriously.

The war in Yugoslavia will inevitably force Europeans to return to the idea of having a Europe-wide strategy of their own for the twenty-first century. The need for this has long since come of age. It was on this basis that the *Charter of Paris for a New Europe* came into existence in 1990. Some dismissed this document with light-minded scorn, but no one has proposed any ideas or principles better than the ones embodied in the Paris charter. The present Yugoslav tragedy is partly a result of the fact that the charter

was not adopted as the basis for actual policy by the governments that endorsed it.

Renewed consideration is being given to this matter. Let me cite as an example the remarks of former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of Germany: "Alliance between Europe and North America remains desirable as never before. But Europe should not become a strategic satellite of Washington. . . . NATO cannot guarantee peace on the entire planet, let alone resolve the enormous problems of a nonmilitary character that humanity will encounter in the twenty-first century."

The "Green Cross International" Statement

[Translator's note: After the Milosevic government agreed to withdraw its forces from Kosovo and permit an international force, primarily NATO troops, but now under UN authorization, to take control of the province, Mikhail Gorbachev issued the following statement dated June 18, 1999.]

Now that the air strikes against Yugoslavia have stopped, the world community will have to assess the damage and draw lessons from the events of these past months. We should not allow this misguided and unwarranted action to be followed by the wrong conclusions. Faced with the plight of the Kosovars, the destruction of much of the essential infrastructure in the rest of Yugoslavia, and the tremendous damage to international relations, triumphant statements sound hollow. What is really needed now is responsible analysis.

As president of Green Cross International, a nongovernmental environmental organization that was among the first to sound the alarm about the environmental consequences of NATO's military action, I feel duty bound to continue the discussion. A region-wide environmental catastrophe may have been avoided, though only time and an unbiased assessment will tell. Some might now ask: "Was the threat exaggerated? Could nature be much more resilient to the impact of war than we thought?" Such complacency is dangerous.

Let us recall the effects of the hostilities that followed Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait. Data cited at an international conference on the environmental consequences of war held in Washington in June 1998 indicate that these consequences are long-term. Green Cross experts estimate that 40 percent of Kuwait's strategic water resources have been irreversibly polluted with oil. The reports of health problems among US and British soldiers who fought in that war—problems that now also affect their chil-

dren—are alarming. The environmental and medical consequences of the war in Iraq itself are, for reasons that are well known, not widely covered by the media or studied by scientists.

Military action against Yugoslavia included use of weapons containing depleted uranium (DU). Such weapons burn at high temperatures, producing poisonous clouds of uranium oxide that dissolve in the pulmonary and bronchial fluids. Anyone within the radius of 300 meters from the epicenter of the explosion inhales large amounts of such particles. Although radiation levels produced by the external source are quite low, the internal radiation source damages various types of cells in the human body, destroys chromosomes, and affects the reproductive system.

We are told that depleted uranium components are harmless and that DU weapons are therefore a legitimate means of warfare. Many military and political leaders believed—and some seem to believe even now—that nuclear weapons too are quite "conventional," albeit a more powerful kind of weaponry.

I am calling for a comprehensive analysis of the environmental situation in Yugoslavia and other countries in the region and in the Danube basin. This should be a priority. But we must do more than that. That military conflicts in our time can cause both a human and an environmental catastrophe makes the task of preventing them even more important. Prevention must be foremost in our thinking and our actions. But if hostilities break out despite all our efforts, they must be constrained by certain legal limits. Such constraints have been laid down by the Geneva conventions and their protocols. They should be supplemented by provisions to limit the environmental damage caused by warfare.

Specifically, I believe that strikes against certain industries and infrastructure, such as nuclear power stations and some chemical and petrochemical plants, must be prohibited. We should prohibit weapons whose use may have particularly dangerous, long-term environmental and medical consequences. In my view, weapons containing depleted uranium should be among the first to be banned.

The time has come to convene a second conference on the environmental consequences of war in order to discuss issues of this kind. The conference should also address the need for an emergency fund to finance measures to deal with the aftermath of environmental catastrophes. Recent events underscore the urgency of this proposal.

Environmentalists, political leaders, and public opinion should now

demonstrate that we can learn the right lessons from the tragedies of the twentieth century. The human drama and the drama of nature should be of equal concern to us. They should sound a call to responsible action.

To summarize briefly, then, peace and security in Europe require new efforts. The European political structure has not yet undertaken such efforts, or it has done so to an insufficient degree. The following must be kept in mind, however:

- The peaceful future of Europe can only be a joint future, or peace will not exist at all.
- A joint future and continent-wide security require, above all, profound and widely ramified cooperation on a Europe-wide basis in all the main spheres of life.
- A reliable basis for such cooperation exists in the common roots of European culture and a common history, as well as an undeniable common interest in peace and stability.