THE DIRECTOR OF
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Fred -

This editorial [redacted] STAT

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POWER AND SUPERPOWER

"The elementary means by which all foreign policy must be conducted are the armed forces of the nation, the arrangements of its strategic position and the choice of its alliances. In the American ideology of our time these things have come to be regarded as militaristic, imperialistic, reactionary and archaic. The proper concern of right-minded men was peace, disarmament and the choice between non-intervention and collective security."

These words were written by Walter Lippman 40 years ago but they accurately describe the trend of American foreign policy in the wake of the Vietnam defeat in the early seventies. That defeat was accompanied by a period of western appeasement which resulted in a dramatic expansion of Soviet influence into Laos, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Yemen, Libya, Syria, Zaire, Madagascar, Seychelles, Nicaragua and Grenada. To that must be added a continuous decline in the self-confidence of the Atlantic Alliance and a faltering in the purposiveness of United States policy in the Middle East and Central America.

Mr Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980 on a clear platform to restore America's strategic confidence by increasing its defence strength and discontinuing these policies of appeasement. Throughout his first term every effort was made by the Soviet Union to prevent that occurring. The Soviet expansion continued, as did the intimidation of America's formal and informal allies.

Fortunately the American electorate held its nerve, as did the Alliance – just. The cruise missiles were installed. The allies refused to be bullied into making any concessions simply to resume negotiations broken off unilaterally in a fit of pique by the other side. By September it was clear that the Soviet Union had begun to adjust to the failure of its diplomacy. Mr Gromyko visited Washington in recognition of Soviet assumptions that President Reagan would indeed be leading the Alliance for the next four years.

After his re-election there is now a recurring and world-wide attempt to induce President Reagan to change the policies and attitudes on which he has twice been elected to represent his country. That is not surprising given the persistence of Soviet diplomacy. Soviet leaders work to long rhythms which outpace the historic breathlessness of western electoral timetables. Soviet leaders exploit their advantage and they are helped in this, not always unconsciously, by the pervasive cultural refusal in the western liberal establishments to recognize and accept the hard simple principles of Mr Reagan's leadership for which he received such decisive confirmation in the election, against all liberal hopes and predictions.

A liberation for the United States

This principle is the reassertion of American power and self-confidence and an end to appeasement. So why is it that now, after a second endorsement, there is so much pressure for change? One can see it even in Dr Kissinger's recent article in *The Sunday Times* where he starts by deploring the fact that, "for too long presidential elections have led to reassessments of American foreign policy" and then contradicts himself a few paragraphs later by suggesting that, "the deepest significance of Reagan's second term is that it has liberated the US to undertake in a climate of conciliation a long overdue reassessment of the basic assumptions of its foreign policy". Double-speak indeed.

The deepest significance of Reagan's second term is that it has indeed liberated the United States. It has liberated it from the incubus of a period of détente and appeasement which was thought by most commentators to be the new and settled orthodoxy, as Lippman had perceived it to be in a previous phase. It has liberated the United States by providing it with the opportunity to consolidate the Reagan policies of the first term without being undermined by persistent attempts to prove the ephemerality of those policies, their lack of substance and durability. In other words there should be no change. There should be no "reassessment" suggesting any revision of Mr Reagan's basic principles. His opportunity is now to show the world that he is consistent and that his policies, when he leaves the stage, will have had an eight year period to unfold without the disadvantage of some so-called mid-term "reassessment" undermining those principles to which he has stuck throughout his first term and for which he received the electors' approval for a second.

In the light of the proposed Shultz/Gromyko meeting in the new year what should this mean? Mr Reagan has always, quite rightly, indicated a willingness to talk but from a position of strength. That combination must be maintained. The Soviet Union respects strength as much as it exploits weakness. It will try every trick in its book to use such discussions to undermine American strength and repair some of its own strategic weaknesses. We should thus examine the Soviet position with care to be continuously aware of those weaknesses and determined on the need to perpetuate them.

Too often, in the détente period, the response to so-called Soviet insecurity was an expression of western guilt leading to some reduction in our strength as though it would be possible, in the words of Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick, "to control anybody's aggressive behaviour by taking care not to frustrate them unduly in the first place". Appeasement is based inevitably on wishful thinking about the people whom one is trying to appease.

Reagan's chance for manoeuvre

Soviet society is mobilized for war, both a shooting war and a class war. Since the Geneva Conference of 1922 Soviet officials have been currying western economic assistance to make up for their strategic weaknesses while their leaders have used double-talk to conceal their aggressive intentions against the free world.

However, the Soviet Union desires the fruits of war without the risks. That is the basis of Mr Reagan's main opportunity now. There is a common interest in avoidance of nuclear war and therefore in avoiding any rituals which might lead to one. That gives ample room for tactical manoeuvre. First, there is much to discuss to remind the Soviet Union that its relationship with the other major nuclear power cannot be pushed too far in peripheral non-nuclear settings without eventually jeopardising the mutual concern they both have for the prevention of nuclear tensions. It has to be made clear to the Soviet Union that their persistent struggle in these peripheral areas makes it necessary for the United States to maintain and improve its strategic nuclear superiority over

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Soviet capabilities.

Secondly, this common desire to avoid nuclear war must affect negotiations about such new nuclear systems. It is thus important for Mr Reagan to persist with the Strategic Defence Initiative. That is the underlying source of pressure on the Soviet leadership. It has brought it back to the negotiating table and it should not be eased up unless and until a decisive arms control arrangement is identified. Such an arrangement must include significant reductions in arsenals but only achieved on the basis of clear principles of equality and cast-iron guarantees about verification. Nothing else would be satisfactory. There is no strategic security in a succession of diplomatic nods and winks. Thus the refusal of Washington's bureaucracies to come clean now about the record of Soviet arms control violations does not augur well for the conclusion of any agreement which will command real, as against rhetorical confidence.

However, persistence with the SDI and President Reagan's other major defence programme has even more profound implications for the Soviet-American relationship. As Zbigniew Brzezinski, former head of Carter's National Security Council, has observed, the Soviet system is a world power of a new type, "in that its might is one-dimensional. It is a global power only in the military dimension but in no other. It is neither a genuine economic rival to the US nor – as once was the case – even a source of a globally interesting ideological experiment". The Soviet economy is in the throes of a long historic decline. Professor Cyril Black of Princeton has noted that the Soviet Union, in spite of all the suffering, killing and social disruption of the last 65 years, occupies no higher rank in the table of world social and economic indices than it did 20 years before the revolution.

The full implications of this decline are not likely yet to be apparent to Soviet leaders – and with such a mendacious and self-serving bureaucracy beneath them, why should they expect to be told these uncomfortable truths? However, the Brzezinski conclusion is that Soviet military power, while progressively unable to challenge American power on the basis of equality, (let alone to impose its one-dimensional character on the world as a kind of Pax Sovietica) will nevertheless continue to disrupt existing international arrangements. The Soviet interest will be to undo the stability of the free world system. It will operate at the sub-nuclear level by continuing to foster greater international anarchy where it suits Soviet purposes in stimulating terrorism, insurrection and uncertainty in those areas which are regarded as politically valuable or sensitive to the west.

The challenge facing Mr Reagan, therefore, is to see that such disruptive behaviour goes unrewarded. He must not be seduced either by Soviet diplomacy, or by his own officials, into thinking that the prize of an arms control agreement justifies overlooking these disruptively offensive tactics elsewhere. Consequently the west under his leadership should exercise the most rigorous constraint on any economic benefits to the Soviet Union which encourage or facilitate its military adventurism. There should be no exchange of strategic technology, or know-how, or concealed and unnecessary assistance to the Soviet military economy by, for instance, the grain deal which in 1972 not only involved a 300 million dollar subsidy but contributed to a substantial western inflation of grain prices.

For such a policy of economic discipline to be applied, Mr Reagan has to enlist the active support of his major industrial allies in Europe and Japan. The leaders of those countries share a general assessment of Soviet policy. They could be ready for a concerted approach given clear leadership from President Reagan and greater evidence of teamwork and coherence in those parts of his administration concerned with developing grand strategy.

West can be more self-confident

Above all, a[illegible]n the light of the presidential election, the west should now approach the Soviet Union with increased self-confidence. From that should flow a refusal to be bullied. Indeed there is a case for a change of attitude which suggests some element of counter-offensive against the long assault on our values by the Marxist-Leninists. This is already apparent at the detailed level of Nato's tactical military planning but there are subtler avenues to pursue.

We must organize and coordinate our policy to achieve greater differentiation within the Soviet system. There should be differentiation between the Russian peoples and their Soviet masters; between the East European peoples and their Soviets occupiers; between the Soviet signature at Helsinki and their abject failures to honour that signature (from the barbarity of the Berlin wall, the constant jamming of western broadcasts to the refusal of elementary civil rights to their citizens); between their professed desire to take part in international security structures and a chronic refusal to share knowledge about how their own decisions are made. Unless the west can monitor their political processes with the same freedom as the Soviets do ours, there can be no question of mutual security. We cannot yet do so and the Soviets show no sign of recognizing that fact. There can thus be no genuine security between us and the relationship must remain based on this inherent danger.

Differentiation, verification and vigilance. Those must be Mr Reagan's watchwords. He must rely on firmness of purpose and clear principles. It would be fatal to change course now in response to pressures to restore the dangerous illusions of the period of détente in the 1970s. The Soviet Union is showing a positive reaction to President Reagan's policy of increasing American military strength. He should not now allow his dealings with Moscow to develop into a weblike system such as Dr Kissinger tried to weave, to the point where the system became an end in itself so that the United States was deprived of the freedom to apply strict conditionality to each and every individual act of mischief perpetrated by Soviet hostility. That freedom must be preserved if the United States and its allies are to be able to cope with a system which operates on an inherently outmoded, malevolent, discredited and dishonourable