

Superpower Ethics:

A Third World Perspective

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From an ethical point of view, one of the most disturbing things about the superpowers is that there are only two of them for the time being. Their physical duality has fed on the theme of ethical dualism. After all, in political affairs, the number two lends itself to the notion of opposites and to the condition of dichotomy. It lends itself to the obstinacy of believer against unbeliever, Jew against Gentile, slave against freeperson, and friend against foe. Out of dualism has emerged the whole moral paradigm of evil at war with good. The two superpowers are caught up in that history of dualism, and it is in the face of this dualism that the Third World must deal with them.

Ideological preferences are of course part and parcel of superpower ethics: Socialism is supposed to be a redistribution of economic power in favor of the dispossessed; liberalism is a redistribution of political power in favor of the marginalized. The United States is a liberal polity domestically, but at the global level does American policy pursue the redistribution of political power in favor of marginalized nations? The Soviet Union is a socialist system, but at the global level does Soviet policy work for the redistribution of economic power in favor of the dispossessed nations? Although the Soviet Union subscribes to the doctrine of economic determinism, its impact on economic change in the Third World is negligible. Although doctrinally liberal, the impact of the United States on the liberation of the Third World is worse than negligible, it is negative. There are solid reasons for these doctrinal contradictions. Let us examine them more closely.

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The Superpowers and Economic Redistribution

Even in the postcolonial era, the Soviet Union and its socialist allies have played a much smaller role in the economic development of, for instance, Africa than has the West. There are a number of reasons why the capitalist world has been more relevant economically for Africa and other developing areas than the Soviet bloc.

First, the global economic system is dominated by international capitalism. The rules of international exchange are derived from capitalism, including a strong leaning toward the principles of supply and demand and of the autonomy of market forces. The major international currencies of exchange are Western currencies—the pivot of which is the American dollar. The international conventions of economic behavior are part of the Western lexicon, including the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The major commercial banks are, by definition, capitalist, casting out chains of indebtedness to one Third World country after another. The major development banks are also Western-dominated—at the pinnacle are the World Bank, traditionally under an American president, and the International Monetary Fund, traditionally under a Western European director-general. Although in confrontations with the IMF, Third World countries have sometimes resisted the Fund's conditionality, in the end the majority have capitulated.¹

The markets for Third World products are primarily in the West. African countries in particular have ignored the opportunities for trade with their immediate neighbors because of the colonial structure of their externally oriented economies. This in turn, has perpetuated the North-South and South-North flows of trade.

Then there is the whole dialectic of global production. While the genius of socialism may indeed be distribution, it is capitalism that has demonstrated a genius for production. No system in human history has shown a greater capacity for economic expansion than capitalism. One result has been that the West produces far more of what the Third World

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¹ See, for example, Peter Blackburn, "Nigeria: The Year of the IMF," *Africa Report* 31:6 (November/December 1986) 18–20; Ralph I. Onwuka and Olajide Aluko, *The Future of Africa and the New International Economic Order* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986); and Robert E. Wood, "The Debt Crisis in North-South Relations," *Third World Quarterly* 6:3 (July 1984) 703–16. See also Cheryl Payer, *The Debt Trap: The International Monetary Fund and the Third World* (New York: Monthly Review, 1974).

“needs” than does the Soviet bloc. And the quality of Western products is usually superior to comparably priced products from the East. Civilian technology tends to be more sophisticated in the West, and Western mass production and unit-cost efficiency ensures more competitive prices in commercial sales to the Third World.

Also relevant to the the West’s impact on Third World development is the role of foreign aid and international charity. Generally, there are four major reasons for extending foreign aid: charity, solidarity, co-optation, and self-interest. The West operates on all four, depending upon the particular case. Charity has often been capitalism’s classical answer to problems of maldistribution. Within the Western world itself charity has sometimes served as capitalism’s gesture of penance to the Christian conscience. In more pragmatic terms, charity has historically been used to diffuse not only the suffering of the poor but also their anger. Within the class structure of a capitalist society, charity has been part of a strategy of co-opting lower classes and of consolidating allegiances. Charity makes the poor more loyal while their leaders respond to the lure of upward social mobility. In general, the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands score high on giving aid for reasons of pure charity, as do the many private humanitarian groups from the Christian world in general.

The Soviet bloc has no comparable private effort in aid and humanitarianism.² For one thing, official Soviet atheism has eliminated the missionary church organizations which might have operated in the Third World. It must not be forgotten that the focus of Western missionary work has shifted from saving souls for the hereafter to saving lives in the here and now; there has been a shift from a focus on salvation to an emphasis on service. The Soviet system also lacks private secular charities, such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and crisis- and relief-oriented organizations, such as Oxfam. Neither is the Soviet tax system geared toward providing tax incentives for those who want to be charitable. Indeed, the system does not even acknowledge that it has millionaires of its own.

There is also the Soviet Union’s posture that underdevelopment in the Third World was caused by Western imperialism—and has to be corrected by Western compensation. It is in fact true that most of the flaws of the African economies are due directly to the legacy of Western imperialism. These flaws include such economic distortions as undue emphasis on cash crops, a leaning toward monoculturalism, the North-

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² For a discussion of American development aid via, say, the Peace Corps program, which has no real Soviet equivalent, see Coates Redmon, *Come as You Are: The Peace Corps Story* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986).

South orientation of trade, the urban bias in development, and the elite bias in priorities. African problems with the balance of payments, the balance of trade, unstable export earnings, and the accumulation of debt are substantially derived from those underlying colonial causes.³ The Soviet Union feels that it is not up to the socialist countries to bail out the West from facing its postcolonial responsibilities in these areas. Nonetheless, even if they had the *will* the socialist countries do not have the *capacity* to amend the international system in favor of the dispossessed. The West is in charge of the global economy. The Soviet Union does not have the equivalent of the Western world's private investments in developing countries, and by definition, the Soviet system has no multinational corporations to balance out the activities of Western entrepreneurs. The whole area of Western private initiative in the Third World has no mirror-image in the Soviet experience.

Finally, there is the persistent Soviet belief that conditions of underdevelopment are fertile ground for a social revolution. Karl Marx himself argued that it was development, not underdevelopment, that created a revolutionary situation. This thesis led Marx to expect the first socialist revolutions to occur in the advanced capitalist countries of his era such as England and France. But Soviet policymakers today know better—partly from the experience of their own revolution of 1917, but also from the history of their attempts to recruit countries to the ranks of the socialist community. Contrary to Marx, it has been the weakest links of the capitalist chain that have been prone to breaking. While Marx thought development came before revolution in each epoch, Soviet policymakers in the twentieth century have been tempted to reverse the order and consider revolution as the mother of development rather than its offspring.

In light of these ideological calculations, the Soviet Union can be forgiven for regarding underdevelopment in the Third World as at best a mixed curse. If underdevelopment is a potential breeding ground for revolution, Soviet intervention for pursuit of development may turn out to be a thrust *against* revolution. Therefore, although socialism is ultimately an ethic of distribution, the USSR does not practice that ethic in its relations with the Third World.

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³ See M.S. Wionczek, *Some Key Issues for the World Periphery: Selected Essays* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1982); T.G. Weiss and A. Jennings, *More for the Least Prospects for Poorest Countries in the Eighties* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1983); S.K. Chauhan, *Who Puts Water in the Taps? Community Participation in the Third World Drinking Water, Sanitation and Health* (London: Earthscan, 1983); and E. Chuta and S.V. Setheraman, eds., *Rural Small-Scale Industries and Employment in Africa and Asia: A Review of Programmes and Policies* (Geneva: International Labor Organization, 1984).

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The Superpowers and Liberation

While socialism is an ethic of economic distribution, liberalism is an ethic of the redistribution of political power in favor of the marginalized. The United States is doctrinally liberal. Let us now examine why the United States, though a child of revolution in the eighteenth century, has become the father of imperialism in the late twentieth.

In a sense, the same reason explains why America was once revolutionary and has now become imperialist. The Founding Fathers of the U.S. distrusted concentrated political power, and because of their distrust they ensured decentralization at home. They worked out a system of checks and balances, a doctrine of separation of political powers, a principle of separation of church from state, an economic ideology insulating government from the economy, and a constitutional apparatus of federalism which divides authority between the local and the national levels.

But the same spirit that led America to distrust concentrated power domestically led America to acquire such power internationally. The system of political decentralization allowed capitalism to flourish. The subsequent concentration of economic power made the United States exploitative of other societies abroad. The more recent concentration of military power made America overly sensitive to strategic calculations, sometimes at the expense of the independence and territory of small countries. An example of such oversensitivity was the American military involvement in Vietnam. This strategic miscalculation cost fifty thousand American lives and more than a million and a half Vietnamese lives. Unlike the Congress, recent American administrations have refused to learn the full lessons of the catastrophe of Vietnam. President Reagan's latest strategic experiment in Central America is another case of abuse of military might. Fortunately, the constitutional checks and balances of the Founding Fathers have helped to restrain—at least for the time being—the intervention by Uncle Sam in Central America.

The recent exercises in Central America are just the latest chapter in the history of the growth of the United States into an imperialist power, which began with the expansion of the domestic base itself. To the extent that growth of the United States into a superpower began domestically, this history has a lot in common with the history of the growth of the Soviet Union into the same rank. Both countries needed to expand territorially before they could acquire superpower status; both were well served by the territorial ambitions in their respective histories. Any discussion of superpower ethics must include a discussion of the sheer size

of both the U.S. and the USSR: there is not superpower status in the nuclear age without a basic massive size.

The tsars accomplished most of Russia's territorial expansion before the October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, conquering one principality after another across two continents. By the time of the revolution, Russian sovereignty extended across a territory larger than any since the Roman Empire. The Soviet Union's expansionist thrust has since added to that territorial vastness. The Soviet Union has absorbed the Baltic States and the territorial acquisitions of World War II into its body politic.

The territorial expansion of the United States reveals a similar sense of "Manifest Destiny." Sometimes U.S. expansion was the result of "buying" territory, which of course included its inhabitants without their consent—the purchase of Louisiana from France and Alaska from Russia were not simply transactions in real estate, they were also purchases of people without regard for their preferences. Then there was the war with Mexico, one of the earliest U.S. confrontations with postcolonial Latin America. Again American territorial appetite and imperial self-aggrandizement sought new levels of satisfaction. Areas like California and New Mexico were forever absorbed into the United States. A Trojan-horse strategy of annexation served the U.S. well in acquiring Texas, which was destined to become one of the richest states of the American union.

In addition to its expansionist period, the United States also had a relatively modest role as a colonialist power, in the sense of ruling other societies without incorporating them into the metropolitan body politic. American rule in the Philippines was in a sense the most important of the colonialist experiments. The U.S. still plays a residual role of this kind in Puerto Rico, the American Virgin Islands, and in a number of other oceanic "territories" and "possessions" currently under the American flag.

It was not until after World War II that the United States entered the stage of global imperialism—America as a global sheriff. America, the incarnation of liberal decentralization of power at the domestic level, became the incarnation of the most concentrated international power in history. The United States embodied power greater by far than the strength of Rome at its most glorious, greater than the leverage of England at its most imperial. The American Founding Fathers must have turned in their graves as they witnessed their child grow into a dangerous, mighty adult. Together they might now jointly reaffirm the observation of Lord Acton that power does corrupt, and absolute power is in danger of corrupting absolutely. The United States has lost the credentials of revolution and acquired the fangs of imperialism.

But if power has corrupted the United States, has it also corrupted the Soviet Union? If the United States is a bad influence on Third World liberation, why is not the Soviet Union a similarly adverse influence on

developing countries? Needless to say, the Soviet Union has also been corrupted by power. But in this case, it is not the Third World that is primarily paying the price: The Soviet Union serves as an imperialist power in Europe, is a liberating force in Africa and Latin America, and has a mixed record in Asia.

The USSR has been heir to both the tsarist and the Nazi empires in Europe. What the tsars incorporated into the Russian empire, the Communists retained; what the Nazis subjugated in World War II, the Russian liberators subjugated under Communist rule. In this sense the Soviet Union is an imperialist power in Europe.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union has been a liberating force in Africa and Latin America. Southern Africa, in particular, has been a major beneficiary of the military help of Communist countries, and without that help the liberation of Southern Africa—from the Portuguese Empire to Rhodesia—would have been delayed by at least a generation. The Communist world has given Southern African liberation fighters hardware ranging from the sten gun to surface-to-air missiles. There seems little doubt that the emancipation of Namibia and the Republic of South Africa will also have to rely disproportionately on the military favors of the Communist world (which already include the unique role of Cuban troops in consolidating liberated areas such as Angola).

As for the Soviet role in the liberation of Latin America, the Cuban model is of course a special case. Ideally Cuba should have been the Western Hemisphere's Yugoslavia—a nation which successfully escapes the grips of the regional superpower without having to sell too much of its sovereignty to the opposite camp. Perhaps Cuba is indeed another Yugoslavia, but Fidel Castro has been forced by the United States to be more dependent on the Soviet Union than he would have preferred. In recompense, Cuba is more of a revolutionary catalyst in the Western Hemisphere than Yugoslavia has proved to be a catalyst of dissent in the Soviet bloc. To that extent, Cuba has been a greater force for the liberation of Latin America from the United States than Yugoslavia has been for the liberation of Eastern Europe from the Soviet Union.

The latest confrontations with American imperialism have of course been in Central America, especially in Nicaragua, where pro-Cuban forces are in power, and in El Salvador, where pro-Cuban forces are in rebellion against a pro-American regime. Recent examples of similar struggles against pro-Cuban forces in power are Grenada under Maurice Bishop and Jamaica under Michael Manley. Behind all of these confrontations lies the basic superpower rivalry. On balance, therefore, the Soviet Union has been as liberating a force in Latin America as it has been in Africa, although the manifestations of the struggle have been radically different.

It is in Asia that the Soviet role is at its most ambiguous—neither decidedly imperialist, as it is in Europe, nor convincingly liberating, as it has been in Africa and Latin America. Soviet hardware support for Vietnam helped Hanoi defeat the United States and its allies in the struggle to control South Vietnam. The Soviet factor has continued to be a major pillar of independence for a unified Vietnam in the face of a basically hostile international environment. On the other hand, Soviet support for Hanoi has indirectly subsidized Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, a negation of the latter's independence. But, without doubt, the most imperialist Soviet action in Asia in the last quarter of the twentieth century has been the 1979 invasion and continuing occupation of Afghanistan—a superpower violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one of its less powerful neighbors.

The Soviet Union has, on the whole, been an ally of decolonization of the Third World, in spite of the glaring exception of Afghanistan. The Soviet role as a champion of decolonization has been aided by several factors. First, in much of Asia and Africa imperialism arrived with Western capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While in reality capitalist imperialism is only one form of foreign domination, it has been the most pervasive form of alien exploitation that the people of Asia and Africa have experienced. Therefore, Third World resentment of imperialism has generally spilled over into a resentment of capitalism. Because of the link between Western private enterprise and Western colonization, a link between nationalism and socialism has evolved in the Third World. Since socialism is the enemy of capitalism and nationalism the adversary of imperialism and given that capitalism and imperialism were linked in the first instance, it stands to reason that nationalism and socialism should in turn become allies.

Second, the standing of the Soviet Union in the Third World—and the appropriateness of Soviet policy—has gained from Lenin's impact on ideology and political theorizing in the developing regions, ranging from Kwame Nkrumah's book, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*,⁴ to Latin American theories of *dependencia*. In other words, the Third World's favorable ideological predisposition toward the Soviet Union was greatly aided by the prior popularity of some aspects of Leninist thought.

Third, the Soviets' motivation for supporting Third World liberation has been strengthened by their apparent grand design to make significant inroads into the lives and politics of postcolonial societies. Supporting

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⁴ Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (London: Heinemann, 1968).

decolonization in Western-dominated areas is seen as one way of winning friends and influencing people in the postcolonial era.

Finally, the Soviet need for foreign exchange has been another powerful motive for Soviet sales of armaments to Third World liberation movements and to postcolonial leftist governments. Pure military aid from the Soviet Union is, from all appearances, more the exception than the rule. Southern African liberation movements have often had to raise funds (often from private sympathizers in the West) in order to be able to buy military hardware from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Some arms have been supplied on credit by the Soviets, but on balance ideological solidarity has not had to clash with commercial self-interest from a Soviet perspective.

The fact that the Soviet Union has been aided in decolonization by these other factors need not mean that the Soviet Union is hypocritical. Even among hardened Soviet policymakers there may remain a sincere conviction that, ultimately, human destiny lies in the hands of the dispossessed—and the masses of Asia, Africa, and Latin America are the majority of the world's dispossessed. Soviet support for Third World causes cannot but be affected by that wider ethical concern. Yet the contradiction persists. The socialist superpower is the champion of the liberal cause of freedom and self-determination with minimum participation in the more socialist mission of global economic redistribution. In global politics the United States has been more of an economic determinist than the USSR, while the Soviet Union has been more of a liberator than the United States.

We have so far focused on political liberation and economic redistribution as two competing ethical themes between the Third World and the superpowers. But what about the ethics of military security? It is to this third area of moral concern that we now turn.

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The Superpowers and the Ethics of Violence

Both superpowers regard Third World states as fair markets for the sale of conventional armaments, subject to wider political allegiances. The U.S. sales are more subject to domestic restraints than Soviet sales. For example, the pro-Israel lobby in Washington has considerable say as to what arms are sold to which Middle East governments. But while American arms are more subject to private political lobbies at home, Soviet arms are more available to private political movements abroad. Certainly, as discussed earlier, the liberation of Southern Africa would have been delayed by at least a generation if Soviet arms were not

available for sale to such movements as the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) in colonial Rhodesia and the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in colonial Angola.

Yet both superpowers are particularly hypocritical in the field of militarism and the ethics of political violence. And within this military domain two areas are particularly subject to moral double standards—terrorism and nuclear weapons, which we will take up in turn.

The first factor to note about terrorism is that it is just another form of warfare—no worse than conventional or nuclear war and considerably less destructive in scale. Some may argue that terrorism leaves civilians particularly vulnerable, but that is a peculiarity of virtually all forms of warfare in the twentieth century. No one on the side of the Allies worried about how many German civilians were killed in Dresden or Berlin as the two cities were pulverized in the closing stages of World War II. As Thomas C. Schelling has pointed out, “in the Second World War noncombatants were deliberately chosen as targets by both Axis and Allied Forces.”⁵ Harry Truman did not lose much sleep about Japanese civilians when he ordered that atomic bombs be dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And what sane government genuinely worries about civilian casualties and at the same time arms itself for a nuclear confrontation, as the United States and the Soviet Union are constantly doing? Civilian casualties ceased to be a major worry of twentieth-century warfare decades ago. It is an anachronism to proclaim the concern only in the case of terrorism, which in this era kills far fewer civilians than conventional warfare. As compared with plans for a nuclear catastrophe, terrorist casualties are less than a drop in an ocean of blood.

Non-state-supported terrorism is normally the warfare of the weak. The flip side of Lord Acton’s coinage is that powerlessness, too, corrupts, and absolute powerlessness can corrupt absolutely. After all, who took the Palestinians seriously before they became a terrorist nuisance? Not even their fellow Arabs treated them as much more than refugees. It took their own call to arms to make them a constant item on the world’s agenda. “Lest we forget; lest we forget!”

More protected from moral scrutiny is state terrorism. Israeli reprisal raids are often a case of counter-terrorism, equally insensitive to the lives of innocent civilians and often far more destructive. Israel’s use of anti-personnel cluster bombs in its 1982 invasion of Lebanon was a particularly brutal response to Palestinian pinpricks.⁶ The United States

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⁵ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) 26–27.

⁶ Benjamin Netanyahu, *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1986). Israeli Ambassador Netanyahu offers a defense of state-sponsored terrorism, especially Israeli state terrorism.

also reportedly used cluster bombs in its attack on Benghazi, Libya, in April 1986. President Reagan had previously asserted that he would have no truck with killers of children. Yet American bombs dropped from the air kill children as readily as terrorist bombs left at an airport. State terrorism has also been committed by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Whole villages have sometimes been wiped out in retaliation against the Afghan mujaheddin.

Apart from direct state terrorism, there is state-supported terrorism by private movements. Both Libya and the United States subsidize movements of violence that often resort to terrorist methods. The U.S. Congress has voted funds in support of the contras fighting against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and Jonas Savimbi's United Front for the Liberation of Angola (UNITA). Neither the contras nor UNITA are morally fastidious about their methods of struggle: contras place bombs in civilian buses, and UNITA places mines near villages, decimating life and limb indiscriminately. Libya has subsidized movements of violence ranging from the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to radical Palestinians and from Basque separatists in Spain to dissident movements in some black African countries. In supporting rebel movements within the Western world itself (like the IRA and the Basques), Libya has helped to remind the West of a version of the Christian Golden Rule: 'Do not do unto others what you would not that they do unto you!'

The fourth category of terrorism (after non-state-supported terrorism, state terrorism, and state-supported terrorism) is state-tolerated terrorism. The United States has been quite lenient to members of the IRA on the run from British justice on charges of terrorist murder and other atrocities. Until 1986 it was extremely difficult for Britain to have IRA suspects extradited from the United States. Both U.S. judges and the Irish lobby on Capitol Hill continue to favor this particular class of "terrorists" as candidates for asylum. The Republic of Ireland has faced a major dilemma about what to do with the Provisional IRA. Most often Dublin tolerates terrorists rather than hunting them down—although the government has genuinely agonized over the dilemma. France has been a haven of Basque separatists for a long time. From time to time Paris makes an isolated gesture to Madrid by extraditing a Basque separatist suspected of terrorism, but this is rare. Yet there is far less disapproval in Washington of French "protection" of European "terrorists" than of its provision of refuge for Middle Eastern ones. It is against this background that the politics of international terrorism reveal such a profound moral duplicity. Double standards are at work, and the superpowers together with their respective allies are often at the heart of that duplicity.

Even more fundamental is the duplicity of nuclear ethics. The whole ethos of the nuclear weapons Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was based

on a principle of nuclear monopoly. Those who had the weapons were insufficiently motivated to give them up; those who did not have them were to be systematically discouraged from acquiring them. A nuclear caste system was thus sanctified, a division of the world between nuclear Brahmins and nuclear Untouchables. A kind of technological imperialism was in the making. Nuclear military technology is still regarded as something not safe or good for Africans, Asians, or children under sixteen. More sophisticated defenders of the doctrine of the nuclear deterrent have argued that we as human societies have a right to take risks, even nuclear risks. But risks on whose behalf? Does country x have a right to risk the survival of countries A, B, C, and D? Does either the United States or the Soviet Union have a right to risk the lives of Indians, Nigerians, Mexicans, or the Swiss? Does anyone have a right to risk the survival of the human species itself?

In the absence of a global referendum on nuclear weapons, there may be a case for extending the nuclear franchise itself, for breaking the nuclear monopoly. The extension of the nuclear franchise will require deliberate nuclear proliferation, upward nuclear mobility for the global Untouchables and expansion of the ranks of nuclear Brahmins. One purpose of nuclear proliferation horizontally is simply to alarm the superpowers into recognizing that the nuclear world is getting too dangerous and to encourage them to take speedy action toward universal nuclear disarmament.

Of course horizontal nuclear proliferation has its risks, but are those risks really more dangerous than the risks of vertical proliferation in the arsenals of the superpowers themselves? Moreover, the underlying ethical priorities are different. The Soviet Union and the United States are risking human survival for the sake of national freedom. Would it not make better moral sense to risk national freedom for the sake of the survival of the human race? We are beginning to be alarmed by accidents in civilian uses of nuclear energy, like the April 1986 Chernobyl disaster in the Soviet Union and, even earlier, the Three Mile Island mishap in the United States. Perhaps we need also to be alarmed into constructive action by the specter of horizontal nuclear proliferation in the Third World. Perhaps until now the major powers have worried only about "the wrong weapons in the right hands," deadly devices under the control of stable hands. This has not been alarming enough to force the major powers into genuine disarmament. When nuclear devices pass into Arab or black African hands a new nightmare will have arrived—"the wrong weapons in the wrong hands," deadly weapons controlled by unstable governments. Perhaps that culture shock, that consternation, will at last create the necessary political will among the major powers to move toward genuine universal nuclear disarmament.

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Conclusion

One thing the Third World remembers very distinctly is that empires do not last forever. The lifespan of the founding father of my own country Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, testifies to that: when he was born, Kenya was not yet a British crown colony; Jomo Kenyatta himself lived through the colonial period, survived British rule by fifteen years, and ruled Kenya himself for those fifteen years. Suppose that when the British first arrived we East Africans had the nuclear bomb. Suppose we said: "Rather than be colonized, we shall destroy the population of Kenya and of our neighbors at the same time." Fortunately, we did not have a nuclear arsenal with which to defend our freedom. Suppose the Soviet Union today conquered the whole world. How long will such a vast empire last? "Backward" Afghanistan alone has been keeping thousands of Soviet troops busy and to some extent even scared since 1979. Even if we were all reduced to little Afghanistans—or indeed to Polands—would that really be worse than a nuclear winter? Asia and Africa know only too graphically that empires do not last forever.

We live on an island in the infinite cosmos, an island called Earth. As John Donne affirmed: "No man is an island entire unto itself. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." These words have acquired a supreme relevance in the nuclear age. No one is an island—but everyone lives on one. There is no other island we know in the cosmic sea; there are no two islands to justify the ethics of dualism. In the face of our cosmic isolation, we must end the dualism and concentrate on our human singularity. Even a liberal who asks "give me liberty or give me death," must surely realize that he or she cannot decide for the rest of the human species. For liberals there must surely be one imperative more important than liberty; for socialists one principle more fundamental than economic justice. The two ethical worlds can have no human meaning unless they jointly agree on one thing—that the survival of the human species is a precondition for both liberty and economic justice.