



E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

12 July 1985

Mr. Herman J. Obermayer
Editor and Publisher
Northern Virginia Sun
1227 N. Ivy Street
P.O. Box 149
Arlington, Virginia 22210

Dear Obe:

Attached is my article "Today's Challenge in World War II
Parlance" for publication in your Saturday, July 20th
edition.

I have also enclosed a black and white photograph per your
request.

All best wishes.

Sincerely,

E. R. Zumwalt, Jr.

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Arlington, Virginia 22209
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Enclosures

TODAY'S CHALLENGE IN WORLD WAR II PARLANCE

Ever since succeeding to the reigns of authority in the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev has been moving to consolidate his power base among the Kremlin leadership. Such an effort has resulted in Gorbachev's replacing many of the old faces in the Soviet bureaucracy--such as Andrei Gromyko's--with new ones--such as Eduard Shevardnadze's. As we wait for the rather dynamic and charismatic Soviet leader to select his final line-up for a team that will, most likely, set the direction of Soviet policy vis-a-vis the West for the next quarter of a century, perhaps it is time to reflect on the prevalent attitudes in the Free World today concerning what our approach to East-West relations should be.

Western opinion makers reflect three distinct attitudes towards the Soviet Union today.

The first falls into what might be called the Chamberlain school of thought. Such advocates honestly believe that Moscow's aggressive demands can be satiated--just as Neville Chamberlain, who was Prime Minister of England prior to the outbreak of World War II, believed in dealing with Hitler's demands. Thus, it is rationalized, a policy of appeasement by the West will--in the end--ensure world peace. It was for this reason that Chamberlain, along with the leaders of France and Italy, agreed to let Germany partition Czechoslovakia--an ally--as part of the Munich Agreement in September of 1938. Mr. Chamberlain returned to London to announce that such appeasement had ensured us of "peace in our time." Less than one year later, however, World War II erupted as Germany--still not sated by subsequent acts of appeasement--invaded Poland without warning.

The second attitude reflected in our relationship with the Soviet Union is what can be labelled the "Vichy" school of thought--symbolized, most notably, by Field Marshal Henri Philippe Petain, the legendary World War I French military hero. He became premier of the French government in Vichy at age 84, in which capacity he signed, in 1940, an armistice with Germany to keep southern France unoccupied and independent. Although Petain was subsequently convicted of treason after the war, his approach in dealing with Germany was to preserve what he could of France in the face of what he perceived as being an unstoppable German war machine. Unlike Chamberlain, Petain had a very realistic view of Hitler's evil objectives. He merely wanted France to be devoured last while hoping for miracles from those who continued to fight. Modern day "Vichyites" perceive the Soviet system to be the wave of the future. In fact, as one famous advocate of this school once stated, the Soviet Union is "Sparta to our Athens." The advocates of this school, however, do not advocate appeasement as a sole means of ensuring world peace. They do, however, perceive a lack of resolve on the part of Free World populations to make the sacrifices necessary to preserve their vital interests and, therefore, seek to obtain the best "second-best" deal they can with the Soviet Union.

Finally, we have that attitude in the conduct of US foreign policy towards Moscow that is representative of the Churchill school of thought. Churchill was a lone voice in the British Parliament in the early 1930's advocating rearmament and warning that Hitler's intentions were evil. His country turned to him almost too late. He promised only "blood, sweat, toil and tears." While England stood alone, he knew not how they would win the war--only that they would "never, never surrender." His ideological descendants today in public and private life fulfill a similar role. Unlike the modern day Vichyites whose awareness of Soviet superiority they share,

but like Churchill a half century ago, they clamor for action. They seek to warn the public of Soviet superiority. They decry the Administration's reluctance to act in retaliation to Soviet violations of treaties and commitments. They call for aiding resistance in Afghanistan. They urge recognition, condemnation and action against Soviet sponsored terrorism--wherever it occurs. They call for a continued arms build-up--as the majority in the country, turned off by the media's focus on defense procurement errors, calls for defense cuts. Like Churchill, as Britain stood alone, these modern day "Churchillians" cannot predict how the West can elude the adversary's objective of political, military and economic hegemony over the globe. But like Churchill, they have the basic faith that democratic people can be rallied in the face of great adversity to make heroic sacrifices and to prevail. Like Churchill in the early thirties, their voices are unpopular.

History has put all three attitudes on how best to preserve Free World interests to the test in the last half of a century. Two of those attitudes--that of the Chamberlain and Petain school of thought--have met with failure. We would do well in the years ahead to keep these lessons of history in mind as we deal with the new Gorbachev team.

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