On self-encapsulating conflicts

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The advocate of general and complete disarmament can find little support for his stand in human history, political science, or contemporary international relations. Still, he has more to draw upon than just the fear of thermonuclear war and the promise of utopian fruits awaiting a warless world. His best case lies in the qualities of socio-political conflicts that are self-encapsulating. East-West relations may now be undergoing such a transformation.

I.

The thoughtful disarmer is quick to realize that he deals not merely, or even mainly, with arms but with a complex of political, social, economic, and psychological factors. The question is not what to do about weapons but what to do about a global power conflict between two superpowers and the disarrayed camps they lead; and it is not so much a question of what to do about it (a question that assumes too much human rationality and self-control) but rather of determining the direction in which this global conflict is evolving and to what degree its course can be affected. The disarmer suggests in effect that the USSR-US conflict is undergoing encapsulation, though the shift is by no means "inevitable" and might be helped along.

Encapsulation refers to the process by which conflicts are modified in such a way that they become limited by rules (the "capsule"). The rules exclude some modes of conflict that were practiced earlier (or at least not ruled out), while they legitimize other modes. Conflicts that are "encapsulated" are not solved in the sense that the parties become pacified. But the use of arms, or some usages of arms, are effectively ruled out. Hence the special interest of this process to the student of international affairs. Most observers do not expect the Communist and the capitalist views to become reconciled and hence suggest that the political basis for disarmament is lacking. They see only two alternatives: two (or more) powers that are basically either hostile or friendly. Encapsulated conflicts point to a third kind of relationship. Here feelings of hostility, differences of belief or interests, and a mutually aggressive orientation might well continue, only the sides rule out some means and some modes of conflict. In this sense encapsulation is

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1 The thesis presented here is elaborated in my Winning without War (1964b). I am indebted to D. B. Breman and David Riesman for comments on an earlier version of this article.
less demanding than pacification, since it does not require that the conflict be resolved or extinguished but only that the range of its expression be curbed; hostile parties are more readily “encapsulated” than pacified.

At the same time encapsulation tends to provide a more lasting solution than does pacification. When pacified, the parties remain independent units that, after a period of time, might again find their differences of viewpoint or interest provoked, leading to new conflicts or renewal of the old one. Once encapsulated, the parties lose some of their independence by being tied and limited by the capsule that has evolved; it is this capsule that limits future conflicts, though the possibility of breaking a capsule—i.e., undermining the rules and bonds formed—can by no means be ruled out.

Capsules differ considerably in their scope and hence in their strength. Some minimal rules govern even the most unrestrained conflicts, such as the use of the white flag, the avoidance of poison gas, and the treatment of prisoners of war. In the present context these minimal capsules are of little interest since by themselves they obviously do not provide a basis on which an international community capable of significantly curbing inter bloc conflict can grow. The following discussion is concerned not with capsules strong enough to rule out certain kinds of wars (e.g., all-out nuclear wars), the concern of strategists of limited war (Halperin, 1963), but with capsules that might be able to rule out war altogether—the disarmer’s hope.2

The most difficult requirement the disarmer’s prescription has to meet is for the process of encapsulation to be self-propelling. Once a third superior authority is assumed, the rabbit is put into the hat and all the fascination that remains is limited to the particular way it is going to be pulled out. Once a world government or a powerful United Nations police force is introduced, an authority is assumed that can impose rules on the contending parties and thus keep their conflicts limited to those expressions allowed by the particular capsule. But the unavoidable fact is that such universal superior authority is not available, and hence the analysis must turn to conflicts that curb themselves, in which, through the very process of conflict, the participants, without assuming neutral referees, work out a self-imposed limitation on the means and modes of strife.

II.

Combing history for a precedent, scanning the sociological treasures for an illustration, the patient disarmer finds several imperfect cases: three are imperfect in that encapsulation was not fully self-propelled, and the fourth was not fully encapsulated. Still, they do provide some insight into the dynamics of self-encapsulation. It is not our purpose here to do justice to any of these cases, but to describe their basic features for illustrative purposes.

Shortly after Uruguay gained its independence in 1830, the country was torn by civil strife between two gaucho armies, named after the color of their insignia Colorado (red) and Blanco (white). The first president of Uruguay was Rivera, the head of Colorado; his army-party held the upper hand for most of the years that followed. But the Colorado was never able to defeat decisively the Blanco; this kept the country in the torment of war that flared up

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2 The relationship between the reduction of armed conflicts and the growth of global community is explored in Part III of Etzioni (1962).
sporadically over the next two generations, as the two neighboring powers of Argentina and Brazil were feeding the fire. Various limitations on warring were introduced over the years, such as limiting the arena (excepting the cities) and the means of war, under the pressure of business groups, professional groups, and ranchers, whose losses were heavy and who were tired of the continuous strife. At the turn of the century the government turned civilian and, pressed by a dissenting Colorado wing, allowed the Blanco to participate in the elections. These were initially quite fraudulent and led to a short but bloody clash between the sides in 1904. Though the election was won by the Colorado, it was followed by several reforms that allowed more genuine participation in political life for all sides and much advanced the shift of the conflict between various societal groups to political-constitutional channels. Armed confrontation between the sides disappeared. Now the Colorado and the Blanco (renamed Nationals) are two parties which fight each other with ballots, leaflets, campaign promises, and the like, but not with arms. Encapsulation first limited the warfare and now rules it out (Fitzgibbon, 1954).

Labor-management relations in most modern capitalist societies knew an earlier period of considerable violence which was gradually ruled out and is today practically excluded. In the United States, for instance, in the first half of the nineteenth century, labor organizations were viewed as conspiracies and fought with all the instruments management could marshal, including the local police, militia, armed strike-breakers, professional spies, and the like. The workers, in turn, did not refrain from resorting to dynamite and other means of sabotage nor from beating the strike-breakers. The Haymarket riot of 1886 and the Homestead strike of 1892 are probably the most often cited battlegrounds of American management and labor. At the end of the 19th century labor gradually won some rights of organization and collective bargaining, though the process of ruling out violence, on both sides, continued well into the nineteen-thirties. While sporadic violence still erupts, by and large the power of the sides in a conflict is assessed without resort to force, and the means of conflict are largely limited to peaceful strikes, public relations campaigns, appeals to government agencies, and so on. The typical representative of the side is a lawyer or someone coached by a lawyer, not a strongarm man or an agitator. While there never was a state of all-out war between American labor and management, there is no question but that over the last two generations their means and modes of conflict have become much more institutionalized and constitutional, and violence as a means of conflict has largely been excluded (Perlman, 1957).

These two cases, different in practically every aspect, have one characteristic in common: both occurred within a national society, and hence could to some degree draw on it; in both, the sides were under some pressure from the society to curb their conflict. In this sense encapsulation was not self-propelling and provides a poor analogue for the study of intersocietal conflicts. Actually the limitation is not as severe as it might first seem, since initially labor was not a recognized part of society; the relations between the industrial and the working classes were referred to as those between “two nations.” Part of the process of encapsulation was indeed the integration of labor into the American society, and the relationship between man-
agement and labor in the industrial context benefited from the evolution of the bond between them as classes in the realm of the national society. For instance, it made it possible for both sides to work out some of their differences by turning to the legislature, which was initially responsive only to one of them.

The same point can be made about Uruguay. It is not as if a full-fledged national society existed to begin with; actually it evolved in part out of the process of encapsulation and in the effort to contain the conflict between the Whites and the Reds. In this sense encapsulation here was more self-propelling than in the case of labor-management relations. In capitalist societies it was a question of admitting into the national community a new social group; in the case of Uruguay it was more a question of creating such a community.

The encapsulation case most often cited is that of the religious wars, which seems more relevant since it was "international," transgressing the boundaries of any one society. The history of the religious wars, waged in Europe between the Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is a highly complex one. Its main feature, though, is that somehow the contest was transformed from a war of armies to a competition between churches. Missionaries replaced knights, orders replaced the columns of warriors, and persuasion replaced violence. The transition, to be sure, was gradual. First, some areas were excepted; Richelieu, for instance, allowed the Huguenots to pursue their Protestant religion in their part of Catholic France. The rule of cuius regio eius religio also limited the extent of violence for a while, though a fuller limitation of the conflict followed only when tolerance evolved for both religions in each territory.

Encapsulation here was self-propelling, since there was hardly an encompassing society that could impose limitations on conflict between Catholic and Protestant states; initially the conflict was universal, in terms of the then relevant universe, and the limitations on it—whose evolutions (in particular the role of nationalism) have yet to be studied—must have grown largely out of the conflict itself. Still, even this analogue is less than completely satisfying, not only because it took many years of violence to tire the parties to the extent that they became ready for encapsulation, but also because their mutual tolerance seems to have grown only as secular conflicts, those of nationalism, replaced the religious ones. The parties were rearranged and war continued under different flags. In this sense, the European encapsulation did not advance enough to provide a helpful analogue.

III.

To close this long quest for a model, I find by far the most rewarding analogue in quite a different area; namely, in the avoidance of price wars in certain industries. To obviate the necessity of discussing a multitude of irrelevant details, a hypothetical case will have to suffice. Imagine two superfirms competing over the car market; one firm seeks to capture a larger and larger share of the market; the other firm is trying to hold on to its share. The competition is waged (let us assume, in order not to complicate matters unnecessarily) through changes in quality and in prices; that is, the expanding company attempts to cut into the market of the other one by offering automobiles of higher quality for lower prices. The defensive firm counters by matching the offers of the
expanding firm. Both companies realize that an all-out price war might well be 
ruinous for both sides, and the small price 
markdowns might easily lead one side or 
the other to offer larger ones, soon passing 
the point at which cars are sold above cost 
and thereby undermining the economic 
viability of both firms. Quality contests, 
in which each firm tries to excel over the 
other, are also expensive; but for reasons 
that are not completely clear, quality con-
tests are much more self-limiting and much 
less likely to ruin the companies. 

For these reasons it is more "rational" 
all around to limit the interfirm competi-
tion to quality contests; indeed, years pass 
without a price war; the companies seem 
to have implicitly "agreed" not to resort 
to this devastating means of conflict. But 
any day a price war might erupt. The ex-
pansionist firm, set on gaining a larger share 
of the market, any day might turn to a 
price war if it finds that it is making no 
progress in the quality contests. The de-
fensive firm, on the other hand, attempting 
to make the other firm accept a duopolistic 
sharing of the market, feels it must not al-
low even a small fraction of the market to 
shift to the other one; even a small en-
croachment would reward and thus en-
courage expansionist efforts. The defensive 
firm, it is hard to deny, might have to initi-
ate a price war to counter encroachments 
on its share of the market. Both firms 
realize that by resorting to price war they 
might undermine their own viability, but 
both hope that the price war will be lim-
ited and that they will be able to use it 
to show their determined commitment to 
whatever policy they favor, be it expansion-
ist or duopolistic. Theoretically there are 
several ways out of this tene and poten-
tially ruinous situation; in practice it seems 
the range is much more limited. 

The solution advocated by the defensive 
firm is to formalize and legalize the exist-
ing allocation of the market; each firm will 
hold on to its part, and thus both price and 
quality contests, the conflict in toto, would 
be stopped once and for all. The ex-
pansionist firm finds it difficult to accept 
this duopolistic solution; such freezing of 
markets provides no outlet for its ambition 
and it feels that some buyers, given a free 
choice, would prefer its product. Whether 
its ambitions are justified or its feelings 
valid does not matter; in either event it 
refuses to accept the duopolistic settlement 
and there is danger that the implicit curbs 
on the conflict will be eroded. 

The tension thus generated—either firm 
might suddenly find that a price war has 
begun—has led several executives on both 
sides to consider an all-out price war to 
drive the other firm to bankruptcy; but 
this, the cooler heads on both sides point 
out, requires taking some rather forbidding 
risks, actually endangering the very sur-
vival of the firm. Economics is not enough 
of a science, and the information about 
the resources of the other firm is not ade-
quate, to provide any assurance about the 
outcome of such a showdown. In short, 
while this alternative is constantly consid-
ered, it has been avoided so far because 
it is believed to be too risky. 

Still another approach, favored only by 
a few, is to form a monopoly by merging 
the two superfirms. But practically every-
body realizes that the two firms could never 
agree who the president of the merged 
corporation should be, what it should pro-
duce, how to share the profits, etc. This 
solution may not be dangerous but it seems 
unfeasible. 

Finally, the existing precarious "encap-
sulation" might be extended not by impos-
ing new arrangements but by building an
extension of existing relations between the two firms. This would involve making an explicit agreement to avoid price wars and setting up limited machinery to enforce the agreement, while allowing—within very broad limits—free competition through quality. The goal here would be to formalize an implicit accommodation toward which the firms have moved by themselves; to provide both sides with reliable assurances that there will be no regressions; to relieve the psychological strains and the economic cost of fear. Unlike the duopolistic approach, encapsulation does not rule out continuation of the competition: while some means of conflict (price wars) are ruled out, others (quality improvements) are legitimized. It should be emphasized that this conflict-under-rules, or competition, is not far removed from the existing relationship between the firms, which was in effect limited to quality contests and avoidance of price wars but which involved no explicit agreement. The question is not whether the conflict is or is not imposing limits on itself, i.e. encapsulating, but whether the capsule formed is to remain implicit or to be further strengthened by being made explicit.

Among the conditions under which the firms are likely to be willing to shift to explicit curbs on conflict are the following: both firms have to realize that (a) their chances of driving the other into bankruptcy (winning a total victory) are minimal; (b) unless explicitly and effectively ruled out, price wars may occur and would very probably be ruinous to both—that is, implicit encapsulation is too weak; (c) the expansionist firm has to accept the limited outlet for its ambition provided by competition in quality, on the assumption that trying to satisfy greater ambitions is too dangerous and that the only other alternative offered is a duopoly in which there would be no safe outlet at all; (d) the defensive firm has to be willing to forego its desire to frustrate completely the drive of the other firm, because it realizes that in the long run such an effort is unlikely to succeed, if only because buyers like to shift; and the other firm would probably not agree to pacification through a duopolistic division of the market. At the same time, the defensive firm has to feel able and be able to compete in quality; to feel that losses of buyers will be at worst limited, probably temporary, with some real possibility of regaining customers lost earlier. Thus competition will jeopardize the defensive firm’s control of its present share of the market, but it will also open the door to potential gains.

IV.

The international analogues to the interfirm model are too obvious to need spelling out. The Western response to the Communist challenge is largely dominated by the sharp distinction between parties in conflict and parties in peace. East and West are in conflict; resolution through the formation of a world government or all-out war are seen as either unfeasible or immoral, or both. The main Western approaches are "protracted conflict" and a search for pacification. The first approach foresees no accommodation with the Communist system and hence prepares for many years of conflict. The other approach implies a hope of full resolution as the Communist system mellows. A third alternative—open competition in some spheres coupled with a prohibition of conflict in others, through effective international machinery—is not now being viewed as a realistic goal or as the direction in
which East-West relations are actually shifting.

The fusion of containment and deterrence, policies that still form the essence of contemporary American strategy, reflects this conception. For the advocates of "protracted conflict" it means holding the line, buying time, though it is never quite clear for what this time is to be used. For the advocates of pacification, this strategy offers a solution reminiscent of the stalemate of the Anglo-French conflict over Africa in the 1890s. It suggests, in effect, a duopoly dividing the world into two spheres of influence along the containment line; each side is deterred from challenging the other's sphere by nuclear, conventional, and subconventional arms. If such an arrangement were acceptable to the expansionist camp, according to this view, then both sides could live happily ever after in a state of peaceful coexistence.

Duopoly, in this as in other cases, is a stance favored by the challenged side which seeks to preserve its sphere of influence; it is one of the least attractive alternatives for the expansionist side, requiring it to give up its ambitions and its drive and settle for whatever it had gained before the agreement. The central question is whether there is any other approach which the United States could advocate that would be more attractive to the USSR and still be in line with the basic values and objectives of the West. The disarmer's answer is encapsulation of the interbloc conflict so as to allow full and open competition in unarmed capabilities and effectively to rule out armed competition.

There is an important psychological difference between duopoly and encapsulation. Duopoly seeks to extinguish the expansionist drive by frustration: if the Soviets are confronted with an "unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world" (Kennan, 1947), they will gain nothing and sooner or later stop trying. Encapsulation, by contrast, draws upon both negative sanctions and positive rewards. Violations of the rules must be frustrated, but the use of "allowed" means of conflict is rewarded. This approach provides a legitimate outlet for ambition. In this sense encapsulation builds on sublimation, not on extinction.

This difference in psychological quality has some significance for the West, too. The combination of containment and deterrence is not only hindering the Communist efforts but also frustrating the West. Ever since Korea this policy has faced domestic political difficulties because it offers no accommodation except protracted conflict or because the expected accommodation—peaceful coexistence—has not yet been achieved, half a generation after the policy was initiated. Our state of continuous half-mobilization is alien to democracies in general and to the American tradition in particular; the psychological pressure is toward either a rush strike or appeasement, though effective leadership has so far countered both. Encapsulation would allow an end to the psychological state of war and, in peaceful competition, provide an outlet for Western drives as well, since unarmed efforts would have no geographical limits. Trade with Poland, cultural exchange with Outer Mongolia, etc., might be forerunners of broader efforts.

Encapsulation requires drawing a sharp line between permissible and nonpermissible means, but where the line is to be drawn is a different question altogether. Theoretically it can be drawn between all-out and limited wars, nuclear and conventional wars, inner and outer space, and
the like. There are considerations of political feasibility, inspection technology, and the assessment of the dangers of escalation of permissible into nonpermissible conflicts. Such questions cannot be explored within the limits of this article. Here we will explore the characteristics of an encapsulated conflict where the line falls between armed and unarmed means, where war is tabooed but competition in aid, trade, and ideas is fully accepted. One may ask whether the East and the West do not already, in effect, rule out nuclear war and most other kinds, and focus their sparring on a space race and a development race, i.e., unarmed competition.

In effect they do, but the analogue of the two rival firms highlights the difference between an implicit and unenforced limitation on conflict and an explicit and enforced one. The present interbloc accommodation is of the first type. Whatever limitations have been introduced are based on expedient and probably transient considerations. There is little in the present system to prevent either party from exploiting some major technological breakthrough (e.g., in the field of anti-missile defense) by means of an all-out blow against the other. Secondly, since the existing limitations on the conflict are self-imposed and have never been explicitly negotiated and agreed upon, they are vague and ambiguous. Khrushchev, for instance, may not have anticipated the American reaction to his Cuban missiles; yet the US saw them as a major violation of the status quo which it thought the USSR had gradually come to accept. Thus violations might be quite unintentional and still trigger the spiral of responses and counter-responses that would split open the capsule of implicit limitations.

Thirdly, since there is no effective machinery for adjusting the implicit curbs on conflict, the main way of seeking to reduce or extend their scope is to commit violations; these efforts are highly volatile and endanger the whole capsule. The lack of effective machinery also means that arbitration procedures are worked out each time on an ad hoc basis. Lastly, practically no machinery is evolved for validation and enforcement of the rules. The sides rely almost completely on their partisan reporting for validation and on the threat of retaliation for enforcement. Thus they always hover only one step away from unlimited conflict. (Among the exceptions are the mutual inspection privileges included in the Antarctica agreement and the 1963 treaty for partial cessation of nuclear tests.)

V.

There are two factors, one obvious and one less obvious, that exert pressure on both the US and the USSR to move toward a higher international order, toward a more explicit and enforceable limitation of interbloc conflict. One lies in the technology of weapons, the other in the change in bloc solidarity.

When the basis of our current “duopolistic” strategy was formulated in 1946–47 there were only four atomic devices in the world, while by 1964 the United States alone commanded more than 40,000 atomic and nuclear weapons. Their dangers have often been listed, including unintentional nuclear war growing out of mechanical accident, unauthorized behavior, miscalculation, escalation, technological breakthrough, and the spread of nuclear capabilities to other countries (Kahn, 1960). These dangers weigh heavily on both the American and the Soviet leadership. In themselves they do not suffice to produce a
movement toward a new international system, but they do constitute a background factor that keeps alive—if not active—an interest in ways of curbing the conflict.

Less often discussed in this context is the impact of the disarray of the two camps, which is still often viewed as transient. Actually it seems that neither the USSR nor the US will reestablish in the foreseeable future the kind of superpower hegemony they enjoyed during the 1950s. The rising power and foreign-policy independence of France, of Communist China (which makes up with resolve for part of its lack of resources), of Britain to a degree, and soon of West Germany make for changes in the basic international constellation, and these changes tend to favor more effective and far-reaching encapsulation. In the more nearly bipolar world of the 1950s the rules of the game could be left implicit and much reliance could be placed on the fact that the blocs were stalemating each other. As long as there were only two camps the room for maneuvering was small and the moves highly predictable.

The rebellion of bloc-lieutenants opens the international arena to many new combinations. The Germans, French, and Chinese fear an American–Russian deal at their expense; the US fears a German, or French, or German–French deal with Russia. France recognized Communist China; Britain was refused a hookup on the American–Soviet “hot line”; Canada and Britain broke the policy of economic isolation of Cuba, etc.

Both superpowers are now challenged by junior competitors and threatened by the prospect of nuclear anarchy. Unable to solve these problems on their own, they resort increasingly to the joint imposition of universal rules. The direct communication line between the White House and the Kremlin, completed in September 1963, is one measure. Its heralded function is to prevent accidental war, but it may also allow the US or the USSR to dissociate itself from a provocation by one of its allies. Thus it warns the other powers to heed the big two and respect the order they establish—or else be left out on a limb. The limited ban on nuclear testing is another rule set by the big two for global adherence. If this trend continues, the order-by-blocs may be in part replaced by regulation through universal rules backed by the two superpowers (and smaller powers). American and Russian support of India against China, US curbs on Cuban exiles, and Russian curbs on Castro agents in Latin America—all these fit the new mold.

VI.

If both sides should continue to seek joint or coordinated acts and encapsulation continued to advance, to what areas might the attention of the superpowers turn next? The disarmer’s way of putting the same question would be this: assuming an “optimistic scenario”—that is, under the best circumstances that can realistically be expected—in what ways might the presently limited encapsulation be extended? There seem to be three major areas: (a) the reduction of armed capacities, without which little credence can be given to conflict curbs in other areas; (b) expansion of unarmed capacities as these become, even more than before, the center of the global competition; and (c) strengthening the line that separates the unarmed conflicts from the armed ones, thus making unarmed competition less volatile.

The following discussion spells out some of these possibilities. It may seem very much like a trip into a never-never land unless the reader keeps in mind that it represents the optimistic limit of the range
of possible developments and that measures which seem impossible one day are often implemented the next day.

Reduction of arms. In the last decade and a half, both sides have tried to increase their strategic force by qualitative and quantitative improvements. Each side has responded to the achievements of the other by fresh efforts of its own. But as both sides acquire fully protected second-strike (retaliatory) forces, which will make any additional build-up unjustifiable, this upward arms spiral is expected to slow down and even halt (McNamara, 1963). American production of nuclear bombs and long-range bombers has slowed down already; the production of missiles is expected to be curtailed later on (ibid.). If the USSR does likewise, once having protected its strategic forces, the strategic arms race may for the first time find a plateau—especially if there is no major technological breakthrough.

An effective ban on deployment of weapons in outer space, which can be comparatively readily verified, would be a natural correlate; it would prevent the arms race from spilling over into a virtually limitless area.\(^3\)

Many experts believe that some reduction of strategic forces could be initiated at this stage, to be verified without inspection—through intelligence, destruction of weapons at a neutral spot, and other devices (Institute for Defense Analyses, 1962). Additional reductions would require considerable inspection of the member countries by outsiders and are, in my judgment, not to be expected in the near future. But reduced forces geared for retaliation would suffice to provide a much more congenial environment for encapsulation.

The need to reduce conventional and subconventional forces (those used for subversion and counter-subversion) is usually underplayed, but it seems to me of the utmost importance. All the armed clashes in the last fifteen years involved conventional arms and took place in the large underdeveloped territory, or "third world," which has become the focus of the interbloc contest. It is here that the pattern for unarmed competition is molded, as both the US and the USSR are sending aid, technical assistance, cultural missions, and the like to the same group of countries (e.g. Indonesia, India, Egypt). Claims of superiority for their respective technologies, economies, methods of administration, industrialization, etc., can thus be tested according to the degree and quality of help offered to the underdeveloped nations. This is the kind of competition that any fair-minded observer cannot help but bless. The problem is, though, that the limits of this unarmed contest are neither fixed nor guarded; it constantly threatens to spill over into limited armed confrontations, brush-fire wars, that both hinder encapsulation and threaten to escalate.

A step toward understanding between the two camps would be to treat the whole underdeveloped world as a big Austria out of which both sides would keep their armed forces, both overt and covert. Such a multicontinental embargo on the shipment of forces and arms, if it could be effected, would have the following virtues: (a) it would avoid the dangers of escalation by keeping the superpowers out of local conflicts; (b) it would enhance encapsulation by providing a large arena in which the two blocs could compete peacefully to their heart's desire; (c) it would allow

\(^3\) This has been recommended by the UN but still needs to be backed up by the sides, a point elaborated in chapter 7 of Etzioni (1964a).
revolutionary forces in these countries to run their course without big-power intervention—in other words, the fate of governments would be decided by the people of those countries rather than by “big brothers.” There is good reason to believe that this would encourage governments that are more development-oriented and responsive to their people than are the present ones; and this in turn is probably the best way to forward their commitment to freedom and social justice.

Under most circumstances, such an extension of the “Austrian” system to scores of countries will not be feasible. It is likely only if the dangers of unintentional war and nuclear anarchy are more fully recognized, if the rebellion of the bloc-lieutenants continues, and if the US–USSR experience with limited agreements continues to be positive. Even under these favorable circumstances, certain safeguards will be required.

Such safeguards might include remote deterrence forces against armed intervention in the third area. As both sides withdrew their forces, as they did from Austria in 1955, they could be expected to hold these forces in high readiness outside the area to deter or counter any violation by the other side. Furthermore, some machinery would be necessary to investigate alleged violations of the embargo. The Communist bloc has often provided indigenous troops with arms, as was the case in Greece in 1946–47 and in Indochina in 1953–54, without initially arousing much public attention. On the other hand the Western press has often accused indigenous forces, such as the Moslem rebels in Lebanon in 1958, of receiving armed help from the Communist bloc when this was not the case. All this is hardly avoidable in the Cold War context but it could be highly detrimental to the “arms-out” agreement.

The task of validating the embargo rules might well turn out to be less forbidding than is generally expected. While it is almost impossible to prevent the actual flow of arms across borders, practically all secret shipments of arms in significant quantities have become known within weeks after they occurred, whether it was to Egypt, Cuba, Guatemala, or Palestine.

The presence of a United Nations observer force on the boundaries of the third area, ready to move to places where violations are reported or anticipated, could also assist in validating the embargo. Such a force would be equipped, not with weapons, but with inspection tools such as searchlights, infrared instruments, helicopters, and jeeps. The embargo agreement should entitle each side to ask for the deployment of this force without any right of veto. A refusal to admit the UN observer force to take positions on a border—say, between the USSR and Afghanistan—would in itself constitute sufficient evidence that the embargo had been violated, and would leave the other side free to take counter-measures. It is not implied that such an observer force would be completely reliable, but it would serve as an important addition to the remote deterrence forces and partisan sources of information (e.g., intelligence reports). All together—under the favorable conditions of our “optimistic scenario”—these measures might suffice.

Unarmed capacities. The willingness of the sides to limit their confrontation to an unarmed contest is determined only in part by their fears of an armed one; in part it is determined by their confidence in their nonmilitary capacities. From this view, by far the most encouraging sign for the dis-
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aimer is the secular trend, in both camps, to build up these capacities. The Soviets increased their foreign aid from $13 million in 1955 to $403 million in 1959; their number of technical assistants from 4,500 in 1958 to 8,400 by 1962; their propaganda effort was also greatly expanded. At the same time, they reduced the ratio of foreign aid devoted to military assistance by two-thirds and increased accordingly that devoted to economic aid. In a long struggle within the Communist parties of Malaya, Indonesia, India, Japan, the Philippines, and scores of other countries, the new Soviet line that favors progress through nonviolent means over those of terror and insurrection has won, according to Western observers (Morris, 1962). Some observers are quick to add that this is merely a change of tactics, and that the Soviets believe that such constitutional means will serve their expansionist goals better than the violent ones. This is quite true, and for those who seek a full pacification of the interbloc conflict, such a change of tactics might seem of little value. But for encapsulation it is of much interest, since here the continuation of Soviet ambitions is fully expected and accepted, and the question of means used to forward these goals is all-important. No extinction of Soviet goals is hoped for, demanded, or necessary for this form of accommodation. If the Soviets are willing to limit their campaign to peaceful means, this satisfies the conditions under which encapsulation can progress. The Western stand in the limited conflict will then depend on its unarmed capacities.

The West seems increasingly ready to engage fully in such a contest; it has built up unarmed capacities over recent years. The ratio of economic over military foreign aid was greatly increased, the Peace Corps was added, technical assistance was extended, efficacy of information services was improved, association with anti-colonial causes increased, and the Alliance for Progress was initiated. While there are many imperfections in most of these efforts, it must also be pointed out that the claims made about the efficacy of the opponent's efforts are often grossly exaggerated. There is little doubt that if the Western concern and effort in this area were intensified, it could fully compete in the unarmed area.

It is here that the mistaken zero-sum notion often comes to haunt the strategist. Either East or West is likely to have the upper hand in the development race, it is said, and the loser will be under much pressure to broaden the means of conflict employed in an effort to restore his position. Thus any limitation of the conflict, it is said, will be temporary. This view overlooks the important consequence of the vagueness of the measuring rods of the development race. For the last fifteen years, each side claims to be doing better in developing countries in its sphere of influence; in Asia, for instance, both China and India have been watched for more than a decade as test cases for the Communist and the democratic ways of modernization, but no evidence of a "victory" is in sight. Who is doing better, India or China?

Second, the nonaligned countries tend more and more to receive aid from both sides; they trade with both sides, invite their technical assistance, visit their capitals, without joining either bloc; gains in the "sympathies" of these countries are transient, with Pakistan one day more inclined to the West, the next day flirting with Communist China; Egypt, Iraq, Guinea, and many other nonaligned countries
"move" somewhat to the East and somewhat to the West, but the total stock of floating votes, which both blocs court, is not depleted. Gradually the two blocs may realize that neither will be victorious in this race, but both will benefit as the "have-not" countries' standard of living rises, as their prospects brighten, and as their stakes in world order are enhanced.

Machinery. The need for a more potent international machinery has often been spelled out. Its value in providing peaceful channels for settlement of differences of interest and viewpoint has often been indicated; its neutralizing role in conflict, its arbitrator function, its service as a neutral meeting ground, have all been told. Much less often discussed are the conditions under which this machinery is likely to evolve. This is a major subject in itself, but in the present context the following points stand out:

(1) The international machinery—be it the UN, the International Court, or a new world disarmament agency—is most likely to evolve significantly if the major powers see it as enhancing their interests. The rebellion of the bloc-lieutenants and the threat of nuclear anarchy seem to involve such interests. In 1964, for the first time, the Soviets recognized a need for a supranational government as an element in disarmament, and the US State Department initiated motions aimed at strengthening the UN.

(2) The need to service the encapsulation process, for instance with an observer force, is another factor that makes the expansion of international machinery more determined by than determining interbloc relations.

(3) In the short run, no major strengthening of international institutions can be expected; the veto in the Security Council is likely to continue and no effective UN police force is likely to be charged with global security. Yet such developments are not necessary for a significant extension of the encapsulation process, for a considerable broadening of interbloc accommodation. If events do follow our "optimistic scenario" of arms reductions, increased reliance on unarmed capacities, and some extension of the power and use of international institutions, a whole vista of new modes of accommodation and world order will open up—modes which can hardly be realistically assessed at this initial stage.

The utopias of a totally disarmed world have been worked out in great detail; now the paths that lead there need to be charted, explored, and cautiously but persistently travelled. The disarmer's best case rests on identifying and enhancing the forces that advance encapsulation.

REFERENCES


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