

Havel's diplomacy: Supersede Yalta

by Laurent Murawiec

Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel chose Germany, East and West, for his first foreign visits. He then went to Poland where he addressed both chambers of the Parliament. Then, and only then did he visit both superpowers—Washington first, but only after an official sojourn in Canada—and Moscow. The foreign policy themes of his presidency have been set. They correspond to what he announced in his inaugural speech last December: “We will not be the appendage of anyone,” read: the Soviet Union, “or the poor relative of anyone,” read: the United States, or anyone in the West for that matter.

Having set the parameters—independence from superpowers—Havel set out to outline the principles of his foreign policy, and to start giving it a content. President Havel has invited a number of Central European countries' leaders to join him in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, for a meeting on April 9. “The vacuum left in Central Europe by the collapse of the Hapsburg monarchy must be filled up,” he explained, “new structures have to be created.” Czechoslovakia should be the “pivot” for the new mode of organization. Invited to the meeting are Hungary, Poland, and Austria—with observer status. These countries simultaneously face the challenge of “returning to Europe,” as Havel has formulated it, and, as he told both the Polish and Hungarian parliaments in February, they will do it much faster and efficiently if they do it together. But Havel intends to broaden the network of Central European relations to the Baltic Republics, Scandinavia, and even Italy. In the same spirit, Havel expressed his “regret” that a debate was allowed to develop on the question of the border between Germany and Poland. In an interview with the March 10 German daily *Die Welt*, while reiterating his support for German reunification—“a united Germany should be a motor for the process of unification of Europe; I have no fear of a unified Germany, because I am sure that it will be democratic and peaceful”—he explained the new style of relations with the former occupier, the Soviet Union: “Our relationship with the U.S.S.R. is now that of equal partners. There is no lord and no subject any more.” It is the spirit of Yalta that must be terminated: “The new order must replace the relations caused by the results of World War II.

The times of the protectorates and of dependence are over. Freedom and self-determination are on the agenda, and they will lead to a higher degree of European integration.”

The sight of neighboring Poland seeking Soviet, British, or American support in a hoked-up quarrel with Germany, cannot but strengthen the Czechoslovak resolve to act boldly to create a new unity in Europe.

Yalta's progeny challenged

The latest in many post-Yalta plans and scenarios that uphold the spirit of the spheres of influence, appeared in the form of a report from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, which will be presented before NATO on March 19. Author Phillip Petersen, the Pentagon's chief Sovietologist since 1983, under the guise of presenting a Soviet gameplan, promulgates a bizarre plan for the reorganization of Europe. Given the collapse of the Soviets' Western glacis, Petersen presents a patchwork of a “Mitteleuropa” modeled on the Hapsburg Empire, an Italian-dominated economic entity including Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. There would be an expanded Nordic Council consisting of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania. There would also be a West European confederation with Germany, the Benelux, France, and Spain. There is clearly no limit to the conceited imagination of cabinet fans.



Vaclav Havel first went to visit his European neighbors, then the superpowers. Here the Czech President is shown in Munich on Feb. 1, with Federal German President Richard von Weizsäcker (left).

Klaus Fimmen

The interest of this plan does not lie with its silly details, but with the mind that conceived it: It is the same as that of the 1815 Congress of Vienna, the 1878 Congress of Berlin, the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, and the Teheran (1943), Yalta (1944), and Potsdam (1945) series, it is the spirit of superpowers bargaining to carve out their respective spheres of influence. It is the spirit of the "balance of powers" and the "concert of nations" that kept Europe under British imperial domination, with the help of a Russian "gendarme," throughout the 19th century. When Mrs. Thatcher demands that Poland be given a say in German reunification, and alongside Poland, Great Britain, Canada, the U.S.A., all 35 member-countries of the Helsinki Agreement, not to mention the Benevolent Association of London Taxi Drivers, she perpetuates that spirit, playing Poland against Germany, America against Europe, etc.

It is interesting in that regard to see French Socialist parliamentarian Michel Vauzelle, a longtime collaborator of President François Mitterrand, write in *Le Monde* on March 9: "The subtle diplomatic constructions of the 19th century, founded on dubious searches for equilibrium, are not appropriate to the current period. It is certainly not on the basis of mistrust toward Germany that we can base a serious European policy. We should not be thinking of creating with Eastern Europe or Southern Europe, counterweights to Central Europe."

Similarly, Maurice Allais, French Nobel laureate for economics, polemicizes against the way in which the phony German-Polish debate (*Le Figaro*, March 12) has been conducted, and defines the real line of demarcation: "The eastern border of Europe is nothing else but the eastern border of Poland. Thus, Poland's eastern border is nothing but the eastern border of the future Europe." Allais' analysis of Mrs. Thatcher's policy is severe: "It is in the pure tradition of the nationalist policy pursued in the last century by Britain, with the aim of dominating Europe by dividing it." It is no accident, then, that Allais should praise Havel: "A very special homage must be paid here to the exemplary, high ideals and sense of history of the Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel."

The Ukrainian press lavished praise on Havel, in the period preceding the March 4 elections there. His writings have been translated into Ukrainian, and are being circulated there by the Rukh, the Ukrainian national movement—in striking parallel with the inspiration earlier drawn by the independent Republic of Ukraine, after World War I, from the works of Tomas G. Masaryk, President of the first Czechoslovak Republic. When Havel proposes to integrate the Baltic Republics, already independent Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, into the new European order, he is cutting the Gordian knot of Eastern Europe: In order for independence to be effective, the small countries formerly owned or dominated by Moscow need a partnership—ranging from economics to security—which will save them from a deadly "tête-à-tête" with the former Russian colonial power.

Is the U.S. moving to dump Aquino?

by Our Special Correspondent

For weeks now, Manila has been rife with rumors of a new coup attempt by Col. Gregorio Honason and remnants of his Reformed Armed Forces Movement (RAM), the alleged perpetrators of at least six other coup attempts. In response, the Philippines Armed Forces have been on their highest state of alert. But a new rumor circulating in political circles in Manila has been the possibility of a snap election, backed, if not actively promoted, by the United States. Some observers in Manila say this "election" would be to legitimize a coup, not the one that the current state of alert is supposedly aimed at suppressing, but a "legitimate coup" or "electoral coup." Led by whom? It is widely believed that President Corazon Aquino's heir-apparent will be Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos, whom many think to be the preferred choice of Washington.

Since it is no longer fashionable for Washington to openly support military coups and since the Philippines is too large for a Panama solution, other means are necessary. But why get rid of Mrs. Aquino?

Debt and bases

The only considerations entertained by the Bush administration in its policy toward the Philippines are the security of the \$26 billion foreign debt and the American military bases, the Navy's huge Subic Bay Naval Base and the Air Force's Clark Air Base. Concerning the debt, it has become clear that the Aquino government hasn't the wherewithal to implement the type of brutal economic policies called for by International Monetary Fund conditionalities now being demanded by the United States. With the 1989 trade deficit of \$2.69 billion, double that of 1988, the Philippines is hopelessly in arrears in its debt payments. This fact was underscored when the United States abstained from voting on a \$390 million World Bank loan in February, in protest of the Philippines' current economic policies.

The military base question is clear: Bush is demanding freedom of action with the same Teddy Roosevelt yahoo imperialistic attitude that the world saw in Panama. If Bush wants the bases for less money, then he doesn't want Philippine nationalism to get in the way. The only thing staying his hand is the fact that the Philippines' 60 million people might be a bit more difficult to pacify.

If the snap election rumor is true, then Mrs. Aquino's much-touted "get tough" policy toward the opposition looks more like eliminating the opposition not just to her, but to