

Editorial

The first world war—and the third

If people do not wake up rapidly to the enormity of the presently brewing crisis, we may well see the beginnings of a third world war in this century. Superficially at least, such a war may look a lot like the beginning of World War I, with the crisis in the Balkans as a detonator.

Yet really, the first world war began at the end of the last century, when the British in particular, but also the French oligarchy, decided that they would not tolerate German development. A republican, highly industrialized Germany acting in concert with a republican, highly industrialized United States, would have meant the end of any imperial ambitions for this faction.

The similarities with today are startling when one calls to mind the ambitious infrastructure plans of the Germans at that time, projects such as the Dakar to Djibouti railroad project; the Paris to Vladivostok rail project; and the railroad from Berlin to the Persian Gulf at Basra, the so-called Berlin-Baghdad railway. Then, too, there were the politics of oil, which led, following the First World War, to British hegemony in a Gulf, which they controlled. This was the period when the British Navy initiated the policy of converting from coal-burning to oil-burning, and when they established control over petroleum sources.

Americans especially need to study history. The slogan for our times could well be: "Since the Bush administration's ignoring the lessons of history, you had better start studying it." The Bush administration's folly could set off a global crisis. For example, it is now clear that what James Baker III did, on his recent trip to Yugoslavia, was to transform a situation in which negotiations were still possible into what is becoming a bloody military disaster.

It is also clear that Mr. Baker did this largely under the influence of his State Department's recruit from Kissinger Associates, Mr. Lawrence Eagleburger, a man who is very closely connected to the circles of Serbia's nationalist extremist, Slobodan Milosevic, one of the key figures behind the bloody show now in progress.

In many ways the situation today is far worse than it was in 1914. The world is today in a breakdown economic crisis, which is being exacerbated by the kind of trade war policies and IMF conditionalities, being enforced by Harvard University's Prof. Jeffrey Sachs. These are intended to destroy the nations of Central and Eastern Europe to render them ripe for the plucking, by British and American financial interests. Yugoslavia, like Poland, is a case in point, of the disastrous results of Sachs's meddling. Under the combined circumstances of economic havoc, created first by Yugoslav communism's bungling and then by the conditionalities imposed upon that country by the International Monetary Fund, historically determined national conflicts have become the material for a violent conflagration.

If the same policy is followed in the Soviet Union, as is now proposed by the Anglo-Americans, by Jeffrey Sachs, and by others, then a very rapid development inside the Soviet Union leading toward a social explosion with incalculable military potential will be the result.

The same kind of instability is being deliberately provoked in the Middle East. The Middle East region is far more unstable now than it was before the British and Bush got together to start the so-called Iraq crisis in August of 1990. Then there are the situations in Pakistan, in India, and in Bangladesh and elsewhere, to name only some of the hot spots which have been created.

At the same time, despite the talk of a recovery (which really never happened), the industrialized nations of the world are sliding deeper and deeper into a depression which has already begun—at least it has begun in virtually every nation of the industrialized world except Germany and Japan and perhaps in a few other smaller special cases.

It is time to recognize the folly of the policy of the United States in the recent period, in respect to long-range strategic policy, and long-range economic and monetary policy. It's time to get back at least to a degree of sanity we had on economic and strategic policy under President John F. Kennedy.