

Eye on Washington by Nicholas F. Benton

Kissinger would 'Finlandize' Europe

His speech to the National Governors Association is a formula for handing Europe to the Soviets.

Henry Kissinger confirmed that he wants a permanent Soviet-controlled "Finlandization" of Eastern Europe, in comments to reporters following his address to the National Governors Association here Feb. 26. Kissinger proposed an agreement between the U.S. and Soviets that would permit Eastern European countries to have free elections in exchange for constraints on their militaries.

"Those who oppose this idea only want a continuation of the current situation," he argued. "What would you prefer, Soviet troops in these countries, or free elections?"

When asked by reporters why these were the only alternatives, given that the Western Alliance has affirmed the right of these nations to full sovereignty, he said, "If you ask the people of these countries if they prefer Soviet troops or free elections, believe me, they will take the latter."

His address to the governors spelled out the need for a "balance of powers" approach to foreign policy based on the Treaty of Vienna of 1815. He said the U.S. has treated foreign policy as a subdivision of either psychiatry or theology—based, in the first case, on personal good relations or, in the latter, on a good-versus-evil world view. Both treat international quarrels as akin to personal quarrels, he said, which are resolved by individuals through conversion.

By contrast, Kissinger said, the "balance of power" approach does not seek "perfect satisfaction" of either side's perceived goals, and therefore involves a relative balance between con-

flicting notions of what is deemed just. However, he said, its success lies in making sure inevitable dissatisfactions of either side are not enough to compel either to war.

He said a unique opportunity now exists for the "restoration of historic Europe," with security guarantees to the Soviets, and that this must be the basis for the next round of conventional arms talks. He said he was sure that developing such a conceptual framework for foreign policy is a "top priority" of the Bush administration.

Kissinger added that the most pressing problem on the U.S. agenda is Third World debt, given that elections in Brazil and Argentina occur this year, and Mexico's new President cannot keep up the last six years of austerity without a blow-up. "These countries cannot maintain their progress toward greater democracy and free markets without enjoying real growth in a way that involves the U.S.," he said. "It is not in our national interest to continue our current debt policy. What we gain in debt repayment, we lose in exports. There are 50 technical solutions to the problem, once we make up our mind to do something."

Except for his vague reference to a "restoration of historical Europe," Kissinger was very unspecific about what he really meant in his speech—a quality not unusual for him. But this did not seem to bother any of the governors there, who asked a half-hour's worth of questions without pinning him down. Therefore, at the conclusion of the question period, a friend who came to sit in the audience to hear Kissinger

approached me and said, "Well, that didn't sound too bad. I could live with that."

I reminded him that Kissinger had not been specific. "Well, I think he's talking about something like the Swedish model for Eastern Europe," the friend said.

"I think it is Finlandization, which would mean surrendering all of Eastern Europe in principle to the Soviet sphere permanently," I said. "Finlandization" describes the satrapy relationship of Finland to the Soviet bloc. Even though Finland has nominal independence, it has no military capability to resist economical and political bonds to Moscow.

Such a "Finlandization" for Eastern Europe "would be a disaster because it would create a false illusion of peace, and result in the pull-back of U.S. commitment to NATO. Therefore, it would rapidly lead to the Finlandization of all of Europe," I said. "Well, I must go now and greet Kissinger before he leaves," the friend said. "But ask him to be specific when you talk to him. Ask him to tell you what he actually is proposing for Eastern Europe," I suggested.

After a few moments elapsed, I went to the foyer of the auditorium, and saw my friend talking with Kissinger. I overheard Kissinger saying to him, "No, what I envision would be more like Finlandization." That opened the door for the questions from reporters that drew out Kissinger's intentions more clearly.

"The Soviets need the security of knowing they would not be threatened by the Eastern European countries," Kissinger said. In exchange for the permanent satrapy status which defenselessness would impose on them, these nations could have "free" elections. This is exactly what Gorbachov wants.