

The Church and European Security

Brian Wicker

By indulging in a cold war Europe managed to disguise from itself for over forty years the true nature of its malaise. Perhaps that was why it lasted so long. Unconsciously, we hid our plight from ourselves partly by exporting our conflicts (and the armaments to go with them) and partly by suppressing them through coercion and obfuscation at home. By August 1991 the results of these self-deceptions had become crystal clear. The Gulf War and civil strife in Yugoslavia throw up horrible but revealing images of what we have been up to in these last few decades. Conversely, the failure of the coup in the USSR points to a more hopeful future. I want to discuss some of the implications for the Church of these various events.

Our self-deceptions were compounded by the absence of any really searching parliamentary debate about the principles which should govern European security. Those on both sides of the cold war who tried to put forward alternative military strategies or, more radically, new approaches to the concept of security itself were marginalised by the political elites. Creative thinking was undervalued, even suppressed, and parliaments confined themselves to technical minutiae on weapons procurement and the like. The absence of a discussion of fundamentals is the more remarkable when contrasted with the full and wide-ranging parliamentary scrutiny on other issues of principle, for example political union, the limits of national sovereignty or the possible benefits of a western European federation.

The consequences of this neglect are now coming home to roost. European leaders have not known where to turn for the principles on which to base their policies. Instead of thinking about basics, Europe has been offered nostrums about reorganising existing forces within smaller budgets. One result is that in Britain, as in the USSR, the military are today howling with pain over the nightmare of mass unemployment, lack of housing, loss of a social role and of a sense of identity: misfortunes from which, unlike their counterparts in Thatcherite Britain or Gorbachev's USSR, they have been paradoxically cossetted by the warm blanket of the cold war. More relevantly perhaps, they are also howling over the apparent lack of an intelligible military rationale for the sorts of cuts being imposed.

These nostrums are barely intelligible to the ordinary voter. Perhaps they are not meant to be. How many citizens in any of the major European states could tell the differences or discuss the competing merits of a NATO-based European defence pillar, an EC-based one, a WEU-based one or a CSCE-based common security structure? Who knows what a 'rapid reaction corps' is or what it is for? Both the peace movement and the military, albeit

in different tones of voice, have criticised NATO because, in the light of the ending of the Cold War and the subsequent economic depression, its member governments have been cutting their defence budgets according to national financial criteria rather than according to Europe's real security needs. Instead of first analysing what armed forces are for and designing a military structure accordingly, it is widely felt that NATO has just been waffling about the kind of 'threat' it exists to counteract in Europe.¹

Nevertheless, one thing now seems quite clear to all the main national actors as well as to the majority populations in most European countries (though not necessarily to ethnic and nationalist groups and hardline reactionaries): armed conflict is no solution to any of the security problems of Europe. In the west this consensus stretches all the way from the most ardent NATO nuclear deterrer to the greenest of green peace activists. The former assert that nuclear weapons must be kept because they alone can practically guarantee to prevent possible disaster. The latter equally strongly assert that war in Europe is unthinkable because, even waged with conventional weapons, it would destroy European civilisation as we have known it. For what it is worth, it hardly needs to be pointed out that following his exceedingly sceptical view of the justice of the Gulf War, the Pope has come out increasingly as a kind of latter-day pacifist, at least in this sense: he believes modern war can solve nothing and leads only to more injustices than it sets out to prevent or remove.²

The need to abolish war in Europe, then, can be taken as agreed.³ Only the crazy or the desperate are likely to disagree. (That such people exist does not materially affect this judgment.) Indeed I would go further and say that as a rational option for Europe war has abolished itself, simply by its own excesses. In a European environment modern war is simply too destructive and too wicked to be contemplated as a solution to any conflict. We have to find another way if we are to survive.

Still it has to be recognised that recourse to armed conflict in parts of Europe is still very likely. In Yugoslavia it has already happened. Real threats to security have not gone away but, on the contrary, are multiplying and increasing in magnitude. There is drastic economic instability in the east and the consequent danger of mass movements of desperate losers in the battle for economic survival—ethnic minorities, the unemployed, victims of persecution, those who happen to live on the wrong side of some badly drawn frontier; basic resources are scarce or unequal; there are pressures applied from outside Europe, especially from the poor and debt-ridden countries of the third world and the south Mediterranean littoral. Futile, unjust and self-defeating though any armed conflict arising from these causes is bound to be, such conflicts are still likely to occur and Europe has to try to cope with the need to avoid or contain them for the common good of all

Crisis in Yugoslavia

The Yugoslav crisis is a first and doubtless premature test case for the embryonic organisations which have evolved in Europe to meet the challenge of the fact that war has abolished itself as a rational option. Several conclusions seem evident so far. Firstly, the UN is not likely to involve itself actively. Its Secretary-General is against involvement and, in any case, a majority of UN members is likely to regard the crisis as a threat to regional rather than to world peace. Secondly, since Yugoslavia is neither strictly in nor out of the NATO area and (unlike Czechoslovakia or Hungary) is not even in a condition to begin dreaming of joining it, NATO *as presently constituted* has no role to play. The contenders for influence, therefore, seem to be exclusively European ones: notably the CSCE, the EC and the WEU.

After 1989 many in Europe pinned their faith for future security in the CSCE. This was because it embraces all the European states (even Albania is likely to join soon) and has shown enthusiasm for the creation of various mechanisms for coping with inter-European conflicts before they turn into armed hostilities. But the trouble with CSCE is that, even if it can decide by a majority vote to discuss a problem, it cannot take any physical action except by a unanimous vote. Until the attempted coup in Moscow it would have been said that this was unlikely to be possible as long as the USSR faced problems of its own with would-be independent republics. Now that particular difficulty may be behind us. Nevertheless, unanimity among all European states on a plan of practical action in a crisis still seems a remote possibility. Furthermore the CSCE has no permanent staff trained in peacekeeping or conciliation duties. It seems unlikely that the CSCE, at its present stage of development, can do much to stop the Yugoslav rot. So far, all it has been able to do is to encourage the EC to continue trying to limit the conflict by creating space for negotiations. Even if it were better designed to help (and many participants have hitherto seemed hostile to any such improvement) the CSCE is simply not ready. The crisis has come too soon.

This leaves the EC with the WEU as the most plausible peace-maker⁴ Already it has brokered an initial cease-fire and sent monitors, giving time for the parties to think and negotiate. A second cease-fire, tied to the provision of monitors in Croatia and to a peace conference, with the opportunity of EC arbitration is being put together and has finally been agreed by all the parties, including—albeit tardily, as a result of heavy diplomatic pressure Serbia. The EC has been able to do so much partly because it has members directly affected either because of common borders (Italy) or the presence of large Yugoslav minorities (660,000 guest workers, mostly Croat, in Germany). Also, some of the likely actors (Czechoslovakia, which holds the CSCE presidency, Austria, Hungary, even Slovenia) aspire to EC membership. That there is a rationale for an EC role is clear. It was the EC which was able to 'trigger' the CSCE into action by providing the votes necessary to get the issue on to its agenda. Also, it

could withdraw aid or impose an arms embargo. The longer-term question is: what else should the EC do, even if it could agree to do something? Perhaps we have here (as some have suggested⁵) the beginnings of the Delors dream (or nightmare, depending where you sit) of a positive EC foreign and defence role which would gradually displace NATO.

The Yugoslav crisis is a test-case in several ways. Thinking about it may help us develop principles for dealing with the real malaise of the continent as a whole.⁶

Firstly, it illustrates the fundamental fact that all European states, however territorially distinct, are *interdependent*. A full-scale war in Yugoslavia would not remain 'civil' in any meaning of that term. Its impact would certainly not be confined to a few bloody engagements within the federal borders, even if that is where most of the dying would take place. Yugoslav minorities all over the continent, especially in its centre, would make sure of that. There are already refugee problems within Yugoslavia and on its borders. These suggest a larger European nightmare: mass migrations in the wake of the cold war and breakdown in the east. Beyond that, economic interdependence would ensure that hostilities would have effects all over Europe.

Secondly, the crisis illustrates that *economic inequalities* are a source of dangerous instability. One source of Slovenian resentment is that it has built a more prosperous society than the rest of Yugoslavia and therefore sees itself as part of the rich Catholic world of the west rather than of the impoverished Orthodox and Muslim world of the east. To some extent the same goes for Croatia. Such inequalities are typical of our continent, from the north-south divide in Italy to the problems of Muslim minorities in Germany, France and Britain. The centripetal forces for keeping the Yugoslav federation together are only partly about preserving a discredited communist regime; they are also, at least in theory, about sharing the country's wealth in order to create a fairer society.

Thirdly, Yugoslavia illustrates the staying power of *ancient ethnic rivalries and historical memories*. These too are typical of the real malaise of Europe from Ballymena to Balaclava, a sickness only partly hidden by the cold war. They represent the unacceptable face of national liberation and self-determination, especially when fuelled by racism made respectable by irresponsible politicians. The case of Yugoslavia is particularly complex in that ancient Christian antagonisms going back to the division between the Roman and Byzantine empires are overlaid with a more recent (though still venerable) layer of Islamic culture, making for an even more heady religious brew than is to be found, say, in Northern Ireland.

Fourthly, Yugoslavia experienced to a peculiarly vicious degree during World War II a multiplicity of *forms of violence*, including loathsome atrocities and massacres perpetrated by various groups on one another. Yugoslavia hosted most of the complexities of the war within its own small territory: wars between rival fanaticisms, between the great powers, between ancient tribes and even between the eastern and western concepts

of what Europe is. A gigantic extra layer of bitterness and horror was dumped on a small corner of Europe already afflicted by complex and conflicting historical loyalties and hatreds—an unforgotten nightmare hardly dreamt of in the more simple minded wartime societies of western Europe. All this lies only just below the surface of the life seen by sun-worshippers on Adriatic beaches as they sip Rieslings brought to them by Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian or Slovenian waiters.

What is needed to give this fragment of Europe the security it deserves? Several things come immediately to mind:

Firstly, there must be supranational brokers who can help the parties to the negotiating table by an adequate mix of carrots and sticks. EC foreign ministers have begun to assume this role.

Secondly, there must be adequately armed, trained and genuinely independent troops able to keep the warring parties aside for however long a solution takes. Its Secretary-General has already suggested the WEU might help.

Thirdly, all parties must recognise that war is not a rational option and will not gain them any of their objectives. Part of this process of recognition must consist of a disarming of the parties themselves, at least to the point where they cannot take the offensive against each other. This disarming must be monitored and verified to everyone's clear satisfaction by some kind of independent agency. Another part of the same process must be confidence-building-measures of many kinds.

Fourthly, human rights cannot be separated from national self-determination. In other words, there must be some recognition of the legitimacy of making human rights a basis for what is still regarded by most governments as interference in the internal affairs of another country. The precedent set by international action for the Iraqi Kurds was an important step in a necessary direction, although it was made possible only by Saddam's military defeat.

These are the obvious and immediate requirements for establishing a kind of peace in Yugoslavia. What do they imply for a security regime in Europe as a whole? Here I want to argue that each of the contending organisations has its own special contribution to make and that it is a mistake to think of them as competitors. Let us take the merits of each, beginning with the question of a military 'intervention' force.

The only *military force* likely to emerge in the near future with anything like the *multinationality* as well as the military muscle needed for a peacekeeping role in future trouble spots is a reformed NATO since only NATO has the military experience, organisation and aptitude for the task. Of course, it has the obvious disadvantage of being a purely 'western' concept. Since the Soviet coup it is perhaps more plausible than it was to envisage a widening of NATO to include Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland and thus to broaden its constituency. The key obstacle to such a broadening is the obsolete but overarching structure of nuclear threat, which

simultaneously straddles and perpetuates the obsolescent US-Soviet divide. For NATO to be able to undertake the necessary European role, this deterrence structure must begin to crumble into something merely ritual or residual (e.g. a few hundred warheads existentially 'detering' each other, like sleeping dinosaurs, from the ocean floors). Naturally the Americans in NATO would not wish to be associated with a solely European operation, and this is where the WEU may be useful as a lubricant to facilitate the development and soothe ruffled nerves. Ultimately, of course, as the USSR becomes a democratic confederation of sovereign states the 'Atlantic Alliance' will have to express itself in ways independent of the concept of nuclear deterrence.

Secondly, the only organisation with the *territorial scope* to deal adequately with both the interdependence of European nation states and the interdependence of concerns (notably the opposing demands of national self-determination and human rights) is the CSCE. Its scope from the beginning has been from the Atlantic to the Urals. Thus, only the CSCE has a coherent answer to the crucial question: what do we mean by Europe? How much of the USSR, how many of its constituent republics are in Europe. The lack of any agreed answer to this central question is one of the sources of the competition between organisations that complicates our discussion. On 11 July 1991 *The Daily Telegraph* quoted 'EC sources' as

boasting in private that the Yugoslav authorities had themselves insisted on a strictly EC monitoring team, rather than basing it on the CSCE, which would have included the Soviet Union and the U.S.A.

This sort of boasting illustrates my point. The CSCE has the massive weakness of being as yet not much more than a talking shop, unable to act until everybody (including the offender) votes for it to do so. Unfortunately, many governments want it to stay that way rather than to develop teeth, which might be used to bite into the flesh of NATO or the EC. Somehow, the ideas of a peace-keeping multinational rapid reaction force and of the truly Europe-wide political process have to be brought together.

Thirdly, the EC has the huge advantage of embodying in its own organisation the *interdependence* of the economic, social and political spheres of its present and future members. For good or ill it also has the potential for developing a foreign policy and defence structure. But its disadvantages are severe. It is at present only 'western' in orientation and one doubts whether it can or wants to transcend this limitation. Will it be possible simultaneously to widen and deepen it? After the coup, how far might this widening go? Would an enlarged EC find it anymore possible than the CSCE to agree quick decisive action in a crisis, even if it had the military means? How far would majority voting overcome this difficulty?

The conclusions I reach at this point are that there are various organisations and possibilities for progress towards a pan-European security system, all of which have something to contribute to the common endeavour. Jockeying for position between them is a negative factor.

Instead of setting, say, NATO's advantages against CSCE disadvantages (as the UK government has tended to do) it is better to look for what is common or could be shared and to work towards getting the best out of each. For the fact is that all three—NATO, the CSCE and the EC—has something vital to give to European security which the others manifestly lack. The CSCE has the right territorial scope, NATO the military organisation, the EC a recognition of the fact of interdependence. If the future is not to be a re-run of a disastrous past, it is necessary to recognise this point and its full implications. The danger is that some powerful nation or nations will remain so wedded to an obsolescent if once apparently successful strategy that it will obstruct progress towards what is needed.

The Lessons of the Russian coup

So much for the lessons of the Yugoslav crisis; what of those of the Soviet coup and its failure? Here I must be very tentative since much may happen in the days to come. Still, one thing seems clear: just as many obstacles to democracy in the USSR have now been cleared away, so many obstacles to east-west cooperation have ceased to exist, in reality if not in people's minds. The Soviet military threat to western Europe has completely vanished. In its place are serious dangers of conflict between and within the republics caused by unequal distribution of wealth and power, ethnic and religious minorities, huge strategic differences due to geography, demography, tradition and so on. The end of the Soviet empire may well be no more peaceful than the endings of the British or French empires. As each republic defends itself against internal and external threats, it will presumably create its own (probably professional) army or 'national guard', court the favours of potential allies, seek arms from willing suppliers, try to change frontiers unilaterally⁷ and try to salvage for itself as much as possible from the scrapheap of the old centralised state. What those republics which contain them will do with the nuclear arsenals on their territory is a worrying question, although there are now signs that the republics concerned understand that some form of unified control must remain as long as the weapons do. Yeltsin has demanded a second, specifically Russian, finger on the button. During the coup it would appear that there was no clear authority over the nuclear arsenal.⁸ Anyhow, the old danger of attack from the east has evaporated and with it the original purpose for which NATO was created. Whether this means that NATO should disappear, however, is another question. As I have suggested, perhaps it can evolve into a useful cooperative security organisation for the whole of Europe, giving flesh and blood to the CSCE, which is so far only a paper organisation.

More immediately a number of opportunities now emerge:

Firstly, given the possibility of competing sovereign republics in the East, the renewal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, after 1995, is now not only a global but specifically a European necessity. Mere renewal is not enough. Today, after the coup, there is a genuine opportunity to

overcome the treaty's central contradiction: the big nuclear powers were never willing to live up to their part of the bargain by negotiating their own weapons away in return for the non-nuclear states remaining non-nuclear. There reason has always been clear, if cynical. Despite officially adhering to the treaty, the nuclear states have considered an east-west deterrent much more important than non-proliferation. Now, with France and China, for practical purposes, adherents of the treaty and with the disappearance of the need for old-style east-west deterrence, together with the patent failure of nuclear weapons to deter war in other parts of the world—e.g. the Middle East, Yugoslavia and the Horn of Africa—there is now no good reason why non-proliferation should not take precedence over mutual deterrence. This is essential if the nuclear aspirations of Pakistan and India, not to mention Israel and Saddam Hussein, are to be seriously inhibited. Thus negotiation of a Comprehensive Test Ban seems a logical first step.

Secondly, an international register of all arms transfers now seems on the cards. This too has a new relevance to Europe since, after the coup, the problem is no longer mainly a question of exports outside Europe but also one of imports and may well be needed to cover arms transfers between former Soviet republics.⁹

Thirdly, a rapid and successful conclusion of the the current negotiations for a verifiable treaty to ban chemical weapons and for the insertion of a verification element into the 1975 Biological Weapons Convention ought now to be possible and needs to be pursued before it is too late with whatever temporarily remains of Gorbachev's arms-control structure.

Fourthly, START and CFE treaties, just agreed, will presumably be ratified quite speedily. (How the USSR will do this remains unclear.) It is obviously urgent to get these treaties up and running while Gorbachev's authority to speak for them remains. Further, much deeper, cuts in strategic nuclear arms are an urgent priority and ought to be possible. However it is inappropriate to try to do this by yet another massive and complex treaty. A cooperative programme of unilateral cuts, to the point where at most we have only a few hundred warheads on submarines prowling under the Arctic, may well be possible, given the degree of trust now developing between the two sides.¹⁰ Eventually, such 'deterrents' would wither away for lack of purpose, especially if a comprehensive test ban were in force. Also, the project of nuclear-armed tactical air-surface missiles in Europe, pointed exclusively at the USSR¹¹ and designed to replace INF weapons (thus subverting the INF treaty) ought to be scrapped immediately, as a sign that the west has finally grasped the momentous significance of the changes that have happened in the east. There seems no longer any sense (if there ever was) in the arguments for a British independent deterrent as a 'second centre of decision'. Bold steps to scrap such white elephants need to be taken now, to match the boldness of the political decisions being taken in Moscow.

Fifthly, much bigger headaches will attend the equally necessary business of drastically reducing the absurd proportion of the Soviet budget

spent on conventional forces and of converting the arms industry to useful purposes. The coup's aftermath gives us a unique opportunity to assist. It is essential to avoid redistribution of the spending among the republics as each becomes a sovereign state with its own defence needs. The problems of industrial conversion on top of those of creating a market economy will be colossal. This is perhaps the single most intractable problem at the technical and political level. Ironically, people from the west, including Britain, were recently sent to help—as if we had had some successful experience in this field!

In the long term, the list of needs and possibilities can be indefinitely extended, certainly to include the elimination of security-threats from environmental pollution and over-exploitation of resources. The latter is a serious danger in the central regions of the Russian Federation as the rush to create a prosperous market economy pushes unrestrained developers into a headlong quest for new resources, raw materials and energy supplies. But the things I have mentioned are enough to keep us going for a long time.

The role of the Church

In a nutshell, the Church's role must be to encourage all those concerned to grasp the window of opportunity for justice and peace which the failure of the coup has opened up. This is urgent, for otherwise the opportunity will turn into a nightmare: a sort of Yugoslavia on a continental scale. But there is more to the matter than this. There are on the record certain public stances by the Vatican, by Bishops' Conferences, and by other highly-placed Church spokesmen, which are in urgent need of redevelopment or reexamination in the light of the changed world of the 1990's. If this is not done, and quickly, the Church will soon be identified with an irrelevant or obsolete set of concepts which quite fail to do justice to the emerging world and to the Church's prophetic witness. In particular, in a number of fields, the time has come at last when the Church's moral teaching coincides with the political possibilities at the secular level. Things which once upon a time could easily be (and were) dismissed as merely 'moral' ideals, or even impossible dreams, have now for the first time come within striking distance of practical politics. It is the Church's task at this crucial juncture to grasp the opportunities to push things further in the right direction and to take a lead.

It has been a theme of Catholic leaders, especially Popes, ever since the cold war began, that justice and peace can only be founded on international trust, certainly not on any permanent state of mutual threat.¹² The dangers of relying on nuclear threats, long insisted on by Church leaders against the reassurances of deterrents, were highlighted during the coup by the fact that clear control of the Soviet arsenal was apparently temporarily lost. A priority of the west since then has been to get assurances as to the re-establishment and permanence of centralised control. Thus the coup showed that Church reservations about the stability of deterrence were well founded, despite NATO insistence that it had taken the possibility of a

conservative backlash into account.¹³

Associated with the demand for trust, however, has been a profound and recently re-emphasised insistence (especially in the Gulf context, but also in Yugoslavia) that the use of armed force to solve problems is completely futile and counter-productive. This point has now been accepted as the sober truth by most governments in Europe. But the Church still faces the task of putting practical flesh and bones on these moral and theological facts. Unless it does so its transforming message will remain largely impotent to influence events.

So much for the generalities; now for some more specific elements of a programme:

Firstly, in 1983, recognising that Europe was facing a crisis because of the introduction of the INF weapons, many bishops' conferences set out positions on the issues of nuclear deterrence. Following the papal intervention at the UN in 1982, most of them accepted the continuation of nuclear deterrence as morally tolerable but only under certain strictly temporary conditions. Admittedly they felt under pressure to find ways of squaring their teaching with the policies of their respective governments, with the inevitable result that they found themselves disagreeing with each other, or falling into what Cardinal Hume frankly called 'seeming contradiction'. This state of affairs plainly cannot be allowed to continue: the present moment is one for a 'completely fresh reappraisal'.¹⁴ As a result of the coup's failure, and in the light of the Yugoslav tragedy, Europe is again in 'a moment of supreme crisis'.¹⁵ The moral case against nuclear weapons was always extremely powerful but today the political case against them is also, for the first time, overwhelming. This is why now is a moment of truth for the Church on this question. It is obvious that the Pope's temporary tolerance of nuclear deterrence, based explicitly as it was on the conditions prevalent in June 1982, has been completely overtaken by the events of the Gorbachev (and we may have to say post-Gorbachev) era. A new initiative by the Church on the nuclear issue is now an urgent necessity, not only so that the Church's moral teaching can be brought into contact with the changed political realities, but more importantly, so that any influence upon events that the Church may still have is brought to bear upon the need and (at last) the opportunity to attain what the Church itself has long preached: a continent and a world free of the nuclear threat. For the official current teaching, resting as it still does on positions taken in 1982 is now completely irrelevant, even irresponsible. The Church has a missionary duty to kick open the no-longer bolted door to radical nuclear disarmament by mutual agreement between the nuclear powers: that is the policy it has all along advocated in principle but never consistently pursued in practice. The forthcoming European synod is the obvious place at which such a fundamental reappraisal should begin. It seems to me that it is now time for a new, and this time fully coordinated statement, or set of statements, by the European bishops' conferences which would radically redirect the Church's thinking away from its 'seemingly contradictory' toleration of nuclear

deterrence towards the realisation of the nuclear-free continent which has always been the Church's fundamental demand.

Secondly, its 'seeming contradiction' over nuclear deterrence has always been an acceptance by the Church of the right to self-defence by sovereign nations through the use of armed force. This was the fundamental assumption of the treatment of justice and peace by *Gaudium et Spes*. While such a right is still an unquestioned datum of international law it hardly squares with the clear rejection of war as a rational option for solving problems which the Pope has clearly enunciated, and which governments in Europe all tacitly accept for their own continent. The Yugoslav crisis vividly illustrates how self-defence and the attainment of self-determination by means of armed force are obsolescent concepts. Spelling out the implications of this tension between rights enshrined in international law and the realities of Europe's predicament must surely be central to the Church's mission of evangelisation in the new post-coup Europe. Cooperative non-violent security by the whole continent—not merely by its western half—is now the only practical way forward. Given the looming dangers represented by the Yugoslav experience, it is also an extremely urgent necessity.

Thirdly, certain specific positions recently taken up in the international sphere by Church authorities need to be further developed. I refer in particular to the clear support for a comprehensive test ban given by Martino at the Partial Test Ban Review Conference in January 1991 and the condemnation of indiscriminate threats by weapons of mass destruction given by Sodano at the Paris Chemical Weapons Conference in 1989.¹⁶ The practical implications of these positions, among many others, need to be spelt out unambiguously and publicly as part of the Church's mission of evangelisation in Europe.

To sum up: we are living through an historical crux of immense importance. The Church must not fail to grasp its meaning for its mission of prophetic and practical witness. The timing of our conference could hardly have been better. The failure of the coup in the USSR and the hideous prospect of full-scale war in Yugoslavia represent opposite sides of the one coin: the former pointing to the almost infinite possibilities now open to Europe for a new kind of peace, the other to the equally near-infinite miseries that will await the continent if we fail to grasp them. The task of the theologian is to comprehend and analyse, but also to act upon, these facts.

- 1 A recent article in *Survival* (ISSS May/June 1991) argues that as a result of the Gulf War, with its emphasis on hi-tech weapons as a way of keeping US casualties low, the US is in danger of building an ever smaller, more hi-tech force which can only be used against ever weaker and less sophisticated countries, regardless of whether the latter constitute the principal danger.
- 2 Cf the message from John Paul II to President Bush, 15 January 1991: 'I wish now to restate my firm belief that war is not likely to bring an adequate solution to international problems and that, even though an unjust situation might be momentarily met, the consequences that would possibly derive from war would be devastating and

tragic. We cannot pretend that the use of arms, and especially of today's highly sophisticated weaponry, would not give rise, in addition to suffering and destruction, to new and perhaps worse injustices.' Cf also *Centesimos Annus*, 52.

- 3 Some say that abolishing war is misguided since the use of arms in the exercise of justice, e.g. Czechoslovakia in 1968, is then impossible. This is indeed one of the objections to nuclear deterrence. 'It cannot be right to renounce in advance the option of using arms to confront proportionally grave injustice. Force, crude as it is, is at the service of justice and order, and it may sometimes be necessary at least to contemplate it. To refuse to contemplate it is to render the negotiated pursuit of a just international order impotent (Oliver O'Donovan, *Peace and Certainty: A Theological Essay on Deterrence*, Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1989, 88)'. The trouble is that war at the service of justice and order, waged with modern weapons on the continent of Europe, is no longer possible. It is not deterrence as an aim of policy that has caused this dilemma, although the development of modern weapons has been heavily influenced by deterrence policies.
- 4 The WEU consists of all the EC states apart from Denmark, Greece and Ireland.
- 5 *The Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 1991.
- 6 The phrase 'Europe as a whole' is itself unclear and this constitutes part of the problem. How much of the USSR, how many of its republics, are in 'Europe'? Contenders for the role of European peace-builder, notably NATO, the EC and the CSCE, have very different notions of how to approach this crucial question.
- 7 Shortly after the coup, Russia appeared to threaten the Ukraine with what Orwell sarcastically called 'rectification of frontiers' on 26 August 1991. Even after a rapid agreement on economic and military matters between the two republics, the Ukraine was still expressing concern on 30 August (*The Guardian*, 31 August 1991).
- 8 This seems to have been agreed at the Congress of People's Deputies, 2 September 1991.
- 9 E.g. weapons supplied by expatriate Croats to help their fellow citizens in Croatia were intercepted at Zagreb airport by the Yugoslav federal army in early September 1991.
- 10 Getting down to very low levels of mutual deterrence in the absence of trust is difficult for technical reasons, which have been analysed mathematically. For a summary see A. Hockaday, 'In Defence of Deterrence' in Geoffrey Goodwin (ed), *Ethics and Nuclear Deterrence*, London (Croom Helm) 1982, 68-93, 75ff.
- 11 The missiles have to be targeted on the USSR because of 'negative security guarantees' given by NATO promising not to use nuclear weapons on states which are themselves non-nuclear and are not in alliance with a nuclear power. Since the demise of the Warsaw Pact NATO is committed not to use nuclear weapons on the former Warsaw Pact states of Eastern Europe.
- 12 *Pacem in Terris*, 113; *Gaudium et Spes*, 82.
- 13 Cf Christy Campbell in *The Sunday Telegraph*, 1 September 1991: 'Nato's "threat assessment" had always bargained for a hardline takeover, even a military adventure by revanchist generals ... but no-one had planned for ... a democratic counter-coup with ... the apparent total collapse of the centre. Nowhere in western nuclear defence planning are there plans to barge in and "arrest" a Soviet missile silo complex or warship which suddenly does not answer to central control. There was a mid-coup *frisson* when the port of Vladivostok, home of the Pacific fleet with its nuclear submarines, declared for the plotters. There was nothing NATO navies could do about it.'
- 14 *Gaudium et Spes*, 80.
- 15 *Id.*, 77.
- 16 Renato Martino, the Holy See's observer at the UN, 26 October 1990 (English ed of *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26 November 1990); Archbishop Sodano's statement on behalf of the Vatican, (English ed of *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23 January 1989).