

New world dis-order hits economic shoals

by William Jones

A three-day conference on "The United States, Europe, and the Structures of a New World Order" on Oct. 4-6 sponsored by the BMW-financed Herbert Quandt Foundation and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., betrayed the precarious status of this "world order" which was launched so ingloriously by President George Bush with his bloody incursion against Iraq. Present at the conference were notable academics from the U.S., western Europe, and eastern Europe. In their introductory remarks, State Department official Reginald Bartholomew and the Brookings Institution's Helmut Sonnenfeldt spelled out the basis for the "new relationships" which are to underlie that world order: Wiping out the concept of national sovereignty is number one on the agenda.

Sonnenfeldt, a former protégé of Henry Kissinger at the State Department, was most explicit about this when referring to the U.S.-led attack on Iraq. "The international community will not stand aside simply because problems have occurred within someone's sovereign borders," Sonnenfeldt pontificated. Such a breach of sovereignty would not be restricted to situations of military conflict between two nations, the Kissinger clone went on, but would also be applied in the face of large population or refugee movements, environmental disasters, or even in cases in which "a state structure is no longer viable."

"All these issues," insisted Sonnenfeldt, "a new world order can no longer avoid." In order to beef up the supernational institutions to quickly act as the world policeman, Sonnenfeldt suggested that Article 51 of the U.N. Charter which deals with "defense against threats to security" be "reconceptualized."

BMW wants you to tighten your belt

The economic content of this "new world order" was described by the luncheon presentation of the chairman of the executive board of Bavarian Motor Works, the German luxury car manufacturer, Eberhard von Kuenheim. Spouting "environmentalist" jargon, von Kuenheim called for major cuts in energy consumption, targeting especially the United States. From the Third World he demanded "a radical perestroika" involving a "painful process" of implementing free market policies. Needless to say, he prescribed the same medicine for the former communist countries in Europe as

their ticket to this "new world order."

Some mild dissent was expressed. Jean François-Poncet, the president of the French Senate, came in for criticism because France has been balking at welcoming the East European nations into the European Community and at lowering the tariffs on farm goods. François-Poncet, a former foreign minister, explained in diplomat-ese that whatever the shape of this "new world order," the Europeans were not simply going to be the stooges of the "superpowers," but were in the process of developing their own economic and political strength in order to be a co-equal "partner" in these new arrangements—with perhaps a differing agenda.

Austerity for Russia

Most unsettling was the direction the "new world order" was taking in the former republics of the Soviet Union. Both representatives for the Russian Republic, Galina Storovojtova, a political adviser to Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and Ednan Agrev, an assistant to the deputy foreign minister for the Russian Republic, Andrei Kolosovsky, bent over backwards in their obeisance to the new state of affairs, including the unqualified acceptance of massive austerity measures in Russia. Storovojtova, remarking on how the collapse of communism was leading to a breakup of the Soviet Union along ethnic and nationalist lines, expressed concern over the fact that some of these republics, besides Russia, possessed nuclear weapons. She emphasized that this included the first nuclear state with a predominantly Muslim population, Kazakhstan. Although envisioning a "Europe from the Atlantic to Vladivostok," Storovojtova's comments made it clear that there was going to be very rough riding before anything like that becomes a reality.

Ednan Agrev, formerly a member of the Foreign Ministry of the U.S.S.R. who went to the Russian Parliament to assist the Yeltsin forces in the midst of the failed coup attempt, was more explicit in delineating the gravity of the situation. Launching into a diatribe of the difficulties of collaborating with the Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, Agrev lamented that the Russian republic must continue to collaborate with these republics since, if isolated, they would "ally themselves with other Islamic countries." "We aren't the only ones with nuclear weapons," Agrev again reminded the audience, reiterating Yeltsin's unheeded call to take possession of the nuclear weapons from the other republics.

"These weapons may not become a threat to Israel," said Agrev, referring to warnings earlier in the day by Israeli representative Shlomo Avineri, "but they could perhaps become a threat to Russia." Although no one at the BMW conference would admit it, the combined effects of International Monetary Fund austerity dictates and "free market" deregulation being imposed on the individual republics, in this tinderbox of smoldering ethnic and national resentments, could spark a conflict with incalculable consequences for the entire world.