

## LETTERS

TO THE EDITORS:

If, as Robert M. Slusser suggests, he may have "unduly emphasized" what he regards as the limitations of two books he has reviewed in the June 1967 *Slavic Review* [pages 323–26], an author must also guard against being excessively defensive. But several comments on his review of *Khrushchev and the Arms Race* may be permitted to one of its authors. First of all, following a not uncommon practice among reviewers, Professor Slusser castigates the book for not accomplishing an objective it did not set out to fulfill. He writes that the "attempt" to use the study of Soviet disarmament policy "as the basis for a balanced over-all evaluation of Soviet policy is doomed to failure." As the book's title and its subtitle, *Soviet Interests in Arms Control and Disarmament, 1954–1964*, convey, however, the aim was more narrow: to provide a balanced evaluation of Soviet policy in the field of strategy and arms control. While the authors hoped that analysis of one functional problem might enhance our knowledge of Soviet policy in other domains (e.g., in Sino-Soviet relations), there was no pretense such as Slusser implies. The authors did strive, however, to place Soviet arms control policy in the widest possible relevant context, so as to separate and, if possible, to weigh the various military, political, and economic factors conditioning Soviet policy, whether expressed in declarations or in deeds.

Since Slusser's review seems to assume that external politics are on the whole an extension of domestic ones, however, it is interesting that he says nothing about the various correlations noted in the book that provide at least partial support for this hypothesis. One episode occurring in 1954–55 is especially illuminating, for the content and the style of Moscow's disarmament diplomacy changed radically in tune with the respective fortunes of Malenkov, Molotov, and then Khrushchev. Similarly, the book notes the significance of Frol Kozlov's illness in April 1963, which was followed immediately by a change in the announced May Day slogans concerning Yugoslavia, and later by the diplomatic moves that led to the nuclear test ban. (Curiously, Slusser cites some of this same sequence to illustrate how another book which he reviews fails to take account of domestic power factors.)

If students of Soviet affairs knew more about in-fighting within the Kremlin, more such correlations would doubtless emerge (just as they have become known about U.S. arms control policy under the influence of Messrs. Eisenhower, Dulles, and Stassen). Granted that such voluntaristic factors played a large role at certain times, including occasions of which we may remain oblivious, the authors concluded that, on balance, Soviet policy toward arms and arms control seemed to be influenced foremost by military-strategic factors; secondarily by the external political environment (east and west); and that the domestic political situation served mainly as a gating factor—one that on occasion restrained Khrushchev's ability to push through his preferred policies. Most policy initiatives in this field, we believed, bore his personal stamp, although some were thwarted, delayed, or modified by opposition from within the Party or the military-industrial complex. As Slusser notes, we

also examined economic factors shaping Soviet policies but concluded that they served mainly to reinforce decisions taken on military and political grounds. Social pressures such as mass demands for peace and prosperity, we concluded, also played a marginal but subordinate role.

With Professor Slusser we share the hope that such specialized studies will help in the task of achieving a balanced picture of Soviet foreign policy generally.

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