

We're Proving It Again

BY JAMES L. FARRELL

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The landmark events throughout Eastern Europe have now been evaluated by myriad political and historical analysts, producing insights that will keep us busy for a long time. This column won't presume to add anything original, but one observation appears worthy of attention: Everyone seems to realize that the United States won't attempt to exploit the situation militarily, and no one is surprised. Before calling it unremarkable, though, consider this question: Where's that imperialistic menace *Amerika* we've heard so much about during the past generation?

We're no more immune to blunders than many other nations. When confronted with a dilemma, we'll choose a troublesome course — that's how dilemmas work.

Another related part of this reasoning is, to some, far more controversial: Could the United States have reached this point without substantial military capability? Historical evidence says no. Before anyone dismisses this as a boost for extravagant defense spending, I was against the Reagan buildup — enough to send a letter to every U.S. senator when it was being considered (my arguments fell on deaf ears, of course).

At any rate, pacifists are dead serious about peace *not* enforced by weapons, and their arguments can't be summarily dismissed either. Idealistic principles will

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History is filled with examples of powerful nations that unflinchingly exploited every weakness of all competitor nations, particularly former adversaries (and especially *recent* adversaries). The United States broke that pattern after World War II, by going the extra mile to rebuild former adversary nations. Again, those events have received enough analysis to render superfluous anything that can be said here. I call attention only to one central fact: The U.S. wasn't out to take control of the world. Not then and not now.

Does this mean that we have all the answers? Of course not —

remain long after you and I are forgotten and, while this writer isn't qualified to preach about that, pacifists are entitled to the same courteous hearing that others request of them.

OK, what's to be heard? Not something nationalistic, preachy, rhetorical, righteous; nothing offensive in any way. How about responsible? We're glad not to need available weapons. That's straightforward enough: Our country is acting responsibly. We can be justified in deriving satisfaction from that.

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