

understandings of peace and human rights that on some key issues run contrary to what Sakharov actually stood for. Especially incompatible with Sakharov's core values are the use of human rights as a pretext for starting a war and the idea of "preventive bombing" as a method of securing nonproliferation.

The chief reason for such mismatch is that historically, Sakharov—the ultimate among Soviet doves—has most often been presented in the American mass media by Cold War hawks, and later by neocons, who selected from his words only those that suited their ideological agendas. To correct the resulting distortion, it is necessary to briefly summarize Sakharov's worldview and logic.

As a young scientist, Sakharov made crucial contributions to nuclear deterrence. Along with others who developed the Soviet bomb, he shared an understanding that their work was urgently needed to prevent further Hiroshimas. Upon developing thermonuclear weapons, top Soviet experts estimated that even the limited use of nuclear weapons in a war would have environmental consequences that could destroy all human civilization and leave no winners. That conclusion prompted Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 to proclaim the strategy of "peaceful coexistence," which he said would lead to a greatly reduced risk of a third world war.

Sakharov fully supported peaceful coexistence, but he pushed for more, since he felt that mutually assured destruction was still a woefully insufficient guarantee of peace. He developed his ideas in a 1968 essay that marked his emergence as an independent political thinker. By then, the superpowers had learned some caution in confronting each other directly. But their Cold War was a misnomer: It fueled bloody conflicts elsewhere in the world, with both sides justifying their interventions with lofty ideological sloganeering. Sakharov opposed that duplicitous behavior as morally reprehensible and reckless, and as posing the risk of irreparable escalation. His strategy for peace demanded from Cold War rivals a retreat from ideological warfare and a move toward reconciliation and cooperation.

The 1948 United Nations Universal

Declaration of Human Rights offered a foundation that made such an ideological détente theoretically possible. A product of the short period of post-World War II cooperation, it managed to combine in one document attractive values from both classical liberal and socialist programs; it thus gave each side strong reasons to sign on but also challenging targets to meet. Realization by all signatories of that international agreement could have practically resolved many of the Cold War's ideological oppositions. De-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and the civil rights movement in the US both represented landmark steps toward that possible convergence.

But the pace has been uneven and not exactly symmetrical. Sakharov's judgments weren't symmetrical either. In the 1960s he was critical of US crimes against humanity in Vietnam. But as a Soviet citizen, Sakharov considered it his moral obligation first to fight violations of human rights in his own country. During the last decade of his life, he considered the Soviet Union an aggressor and the chief threat to international peace due to its military intervention in Afghanistan. Despite the persecution he endured, his persistent efforts paid off after 1985, when, under the new Communist leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR rapidly liberalized. Sakharov's ideas influenced many of Gorbachev's political initiatives and helped reverse the tide of the Cold War and the arms race.

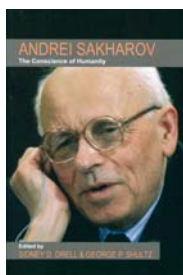
Subsequent progress in realizing Sakharov's vision has been checkered at best. Implementing the 1948 UN declaration still remains a challenging task in every country. It includes, in particular, rights to free education, social security, and healthcare, and a complete end of torture and extrajudicial detentions. In global affairs since the end of the Cold War, unilateralism and withdrawals from international treaties and procedures have emboldened interventionists, removed previous bulwarks and precautions, and opened doors for new destructive wars fought under false pretenses.

It is especially wrong to cite Sakharov's ideas as justification for recent wars, which, *de facto*, produced much graver and more widespread violations of human rights than the injus-

tices they purported to stop. Sakharov's reasoning helps one to see through such duplicitous rationalizations and not be fooled by slogans. His moral example should inspire all of us to find the courage to stand up to authorities, public opinion, and continuing abuses by our country. Unfortunately, the authors of this volume did not dare to do so.

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