P.S. to the NEWS
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THE WAR HAS ALREADY STARTED

When Secretary of State Cyrus Vance returned from his trip to Western Europe soliciting support for Carter's boycott of the Moscow Olympics, he expressed surprise and disappointment at the lack of enthusiasm among our longtime friends to climb aboard this American cause. Even a British newspaper asked, if the West cannot join in such a relatively simple punishment for the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, how could anyone believe we would be willing to fight a war?

The answer is that the Soviets don't believe it. Maybe President Carter's saber rattling can impress voters in presidential primary states, but the Soviets deal in the real world of power, not the make-believe world of political bluff.

Our friends in Western Europe remind me of the old commercials about B.O.: "even your best friends won't tell you." They are polite, but old ties between Western nations make it difficult for them to tell us bluntly why they don't want to cosy up to the United States and any anti-Soviet policies.

A more recent friend who lacks such sentimental inhibitions has bluntly told it to us straight. Listen to this remarkable interview which Egypt's President Anwar El-Sadat gave to Walter Cronkite, as reported on the CBS Evening News.

Cronkite: "Sadat said that the West already was at war with the Soviet Union, the war to control the Middle East, particularly the Persian Gulf's great oil reserves. And he said the United States is losing that battle."

Sadat: "I wonder if you recognize the fact that the battle of oil, of energy, of the survival of the whole Western civilization, has started. Why, whatever you do, if it is economic boycott or economic siege, or it is a military action to release the hostages, or any action, there will be repercussion on all the oil in the oil Gulf states."

Cronkite: "So the battle has started?"

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Sadat: "Has already started. ... We shall say in history, 'After Iran.' 1980 is crucial in the whole decade of the eighties ... it will be crucial for a very long time."

In another part of the interview, Sadat said that all the countries want U.S. protection and a U.S. presence, "but no one dares to raise his voice now, because we are living in a moment when the Soviet Union is taking full liberty and adopting certain stooges in this area, and they fear that those stooges may attack them vehemently."

The conclusion is obvious. Neither our Western nor our oil friends dare to cast their lot with the country they believe is the loser. The harsh reality is that governments, like individuals, prefer to side with the winner, or at least do not dare to antagonize him.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who has issued warning after warning to try to wake up the West, is becoming increasingly frustrated at the failure of Americans to listen. In a recent essay in Time magazine, he pointed out that there is nothing new or different about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. "The Afghan tragedy in fact [took] place two years ago ... but the West shut its eyes and postponed recognizing the problem -- all for the sake of an illusory detente."

Solzhenitsyn describes how Communism needs "the whole charade of detente" to gain additional strength through Western financing ("those loans will not be repaid") and Western technology (to help it launch "its next large-scale offensive"). With pitiless prose he shows that Communism is "driven by a malevolent and irrational instinct for world domination" and is "a mortal danger to mankind."

And yet Solzhenitsyn still has hope. He believes that "the West cannot now avoid erecting a wall of resolve in its hour of extremity. ... The present generation of Westerners will have to make a stand on the road upon which its predecessors have so thoughtlessly retreated for 60 years."

Five years ago our leaders ignored Solzhenitsyn's warnings. Let us hope our present leaders will heed the words of Solzhenitsyn and Sadat.

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