

To China, 'cold war' seems rather hot

"There should be no return to the cold war, or else detente may be threatened."

This view, held by many well-meaning people in the U.S., is criticized by Chinese correspondent Peng Di writing in the Feb. 22 Xinhua (New China) news service from Beijing.

Peng points out that the world today "is not in the least characterized by a return from detente to cold war." Rather, he says, "there is the menacing fire of hot wars as well as the bitter wind of cold war."

Peng shows by references to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Cuban and Vietnamese incursions in Africa and Asia up to the recent drive into Afghanistan that "detente" has been a myth. Present-day reality, Peng offers, could well be compared with the pre-World War II period when Japan invaded China, the Italians went into Ethiopia and Hitler invaded the Sudetenland.

As for the growing opposition to the Soviet war drive and the recent shift in U.S. opinion towards strengthening its opposition, the Chinese journalist views these in a positive light. Summing up U.S. public opinion and newspaper editorials, Peng reports:

"They noted that first of all, the Soviet ambitions for aggression and its ability in making adventures must not be underestimated. The U.S. authorities have explicitly pointed out for the first time that the supply of

grains, credits, technology and equipment to the Soviet Union, instead of satisfying [Soviet] appetite for aggression and expansion, can only bring disaster.

"Second," Peng argues, "the U.S. capability to confront the Soviet Union should not be overestimated." He points out that "the established strategic arrangements of the United States have been made for fighting one and a half wars. Now, in the face of all-round Soviet contention for supremacy and Soviet engineered troubles everywhere, the United States has to get prepared to fight several wars in different places simultaneously."

Peng also analyzes why the false specter of "a return to the cold war" is coming up in European as well as American public opinion circles. Some people, he feels, have been "lulled by the Soviet song of 'detente'" and may have a false "sense of security" since the "disaster created by the Soviet Union has not spread to Western Europe and the United States."

"The Second World War provided people with a grave lesson augmented by many new ones in the past years," Peng concludes. "One would like to ask: To whose advantage is it if one views the present turbulent world as an epoch of detente and describes resistance to aggression as a return to the cold war? It may be beneficial to ponder over and unfold discussions on this question at this historical juncture."