THE MID-CENTURY REVOLUTION IN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY REVISITED

by

RAYMOND A. MOORE, JR.

(Editor's Note: *From the American Revolution until 1945, the United States pursued a foreign policy devoid of prior commitments. As a result of World War II the United States reversed her historic policies and began to play a full-scale role in world affairs. The dimensions and meaning of this change are discussed in the article that follows, and an attempt is made to evaluate the significance of this mid-century revolution today after a quarter-century's experience as a great power.)*

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Understanding the intricacies of international politics is important for Americans today because the United States is so deeply involved in international politics, despite a belief in some circles that we are becoming more isolationist. Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the great world powers have been involved in 12 wars (13 if we include the war in Korea, and 14 if we include Vietnam, the longest in US history). Moreover, the United States has been involved in major wars since colonial days, and although her degree of involvement has varied, it has tended to increase. We have not yet stayed out of a major conflict that we could reasonably have been expected to avoid.

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The isolation of the United States has, essentially, been a myth. But isolationism—that is, the belief that the United States could stay out of the main currents of world history—has not been a myth. It has been real and it has influenced our policy of nonalignment. Until 1945 the United States had never promised to aid another country before she was attacked. We followed a policy of "no prior commitments" and "no entangling alliances."

When the French Alliance was abrogated by Washington's Neutrality Proclamation of 1793, the United States formally inaugurated a policy which ended only when the United States joined the United Nations, signed the Rio Pact, inaugurated the Marshall Plan, promulgated the Truman Doctrine, and inspired the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

When World War II was ended, the United States, for the first time in her national history, entered international politics fully in peacetime as well as during a war. She made prior commitments and entangling alliances. She entered the fray before the outbreak of hostilities. This willingness of the United States to commit herself to the defense of other nations before the outbreak of war (to over 42 nations at present, exclusive of our UN commitment) constituted a fundamental revolution in American foreign policy.

UNDERLYING CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTION

What were the underlying causes of this revolution and what are its dimensions and implications today? According to Professors

US DEPT OF STATE

Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., in the presence of President Truman, signing the United Nations Charter on June 26, 1945.

William T. R. Fox and Annette Baker Fox of Columbia University, there have been at least six important transformations affecting the US role in world politics in the 20th century:[1]

1. The expansion of the European state system into a world system, with the superpowers peripheral to Europe playing unprecedented roles in a bipolar system. This has created the dual challenge of (1) living in a world with other states; and (2) carrying the responsibility to play a leading role in world affairs.

2. The diffusion of nationalism outward from Europe to the Afro-Asian world—and the subsequent demands for a higher living standard and the dignity of participation in the political process by the newly independent and underdeveloped nations. This has created the challenge of accommodating the demands of developing nations without those demands creating war.

3. The democratization of the control of foreign relations at the same time that the widened sphere of state activity has made the conduct of foreign relations ever more complex and difficult. This transformation has created the challenge of reconciling the often conflicting demands of democracy and the national interest.

4. The sudden emergence of science and technology as great and semi-independent variables in the equations of world politics. This has, in turn, created the problem of avoiding thermonuclear war—by intent, accident, desperation, or escalation.

5. The drawing together of the old states of Europe and the transoceanic states of

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European culture in varying forms of association, such as the European Coal and Steel Community, the Commonwealth of Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This has produced the challenge of the Common Market and New Europe, the Gaullist reaction, and the Commonwealth dilemma over Britain's role in Europe and abroad.

6. The new necessity, especially for the superpowers, to do things in peacetime which many states formerly did only in war:

> maintaining a high level of defense mobilization; engaging in coalition military planning; financing a massive foreign aid program; and developing a vigorous psychological warfare strategy. These involve such problems as the challenge of high taxes; the need for disciplined social and political action; an overriding patience, forbearance, and yet determination to sustain policies which will protect the country, but still repel—if not defeat—real or potential enemies.

These six transformations, coupled with the impact of two major world wars, had so changed the environment of international politics that by 1945 it became apparent that the best chance for the United States to *avoid* another world conflict was to help *prevent* one. And the best chance the United States had to survive a war was to so conduct herself that she did not lose a war before the actual fighting began.

THE WORLD WAR II WATERSHED

World War II was a major watershed in our national history. This watershed created the following major consequences for the United States:

1. The United States and the USSR emerged as genuine superpowers with worldwide interests which eventually clashed in 1947 and thereafter.

2. Our traditional European allies, Britain and France, were weakened, making it necessary for the United States to help them in the postwar period.

3. The defeat of Germany, Italy, and Japan and their ensuing loss of power created vacuums and economic problems with which the United States was forced to deal.

4. The general political collapse of Europe made it necessary for the United States to play a major role in postwar reconstruction and defense.

5. The triumphs of revolutionary nationalism in Asia, the Near East, and Africa created immense problems concerning "the Revolution of Rising Expectations"; the new nations' role in world affairs and the United Nations; the population explosion; the growing gap between rich and poor countries; and the proper US policy towards these emergent, developing regimes.

WORLD WAR II WAS A MAJOR WATERSHED IN OUR NATIONAL HISTORY.

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6. The effects of the fall of Chiang Kai-Shek's government and the Communist takeover of China are only beginning to be fully realized by the United States.

7. The Atomic Age fully arrived with its awesome problems of the control, proliferation, and testing of weapons.

8. New international organizations were formed to help build a better world and resume the Great Experiment to organize a peaceful world through the United Nations.

9. The US Government and its people had to learn that war alone does not solve political problems, but as Von Clausewitz well knew, war was but the continuation of state politics by other means.

In light of her World War II experience, the United States reversed her historic nonalignment policy and proceeded to undertake a series of major commitments in which she pledged herself to defend many areas and nations:

1. Helped to found the Organization of American States in 1948 which encompasses all the Latin American States except Cuba.

2. Organized the North Atlantic Treaty Organization of 1949 covering the major states of Western Europe.

3. Created the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in 1954 to help defend that area against aggression and subversion.

4. Affiliated herself with the Central Treaty Organization in 1955 to defend the Northern Tier of the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, against attack.

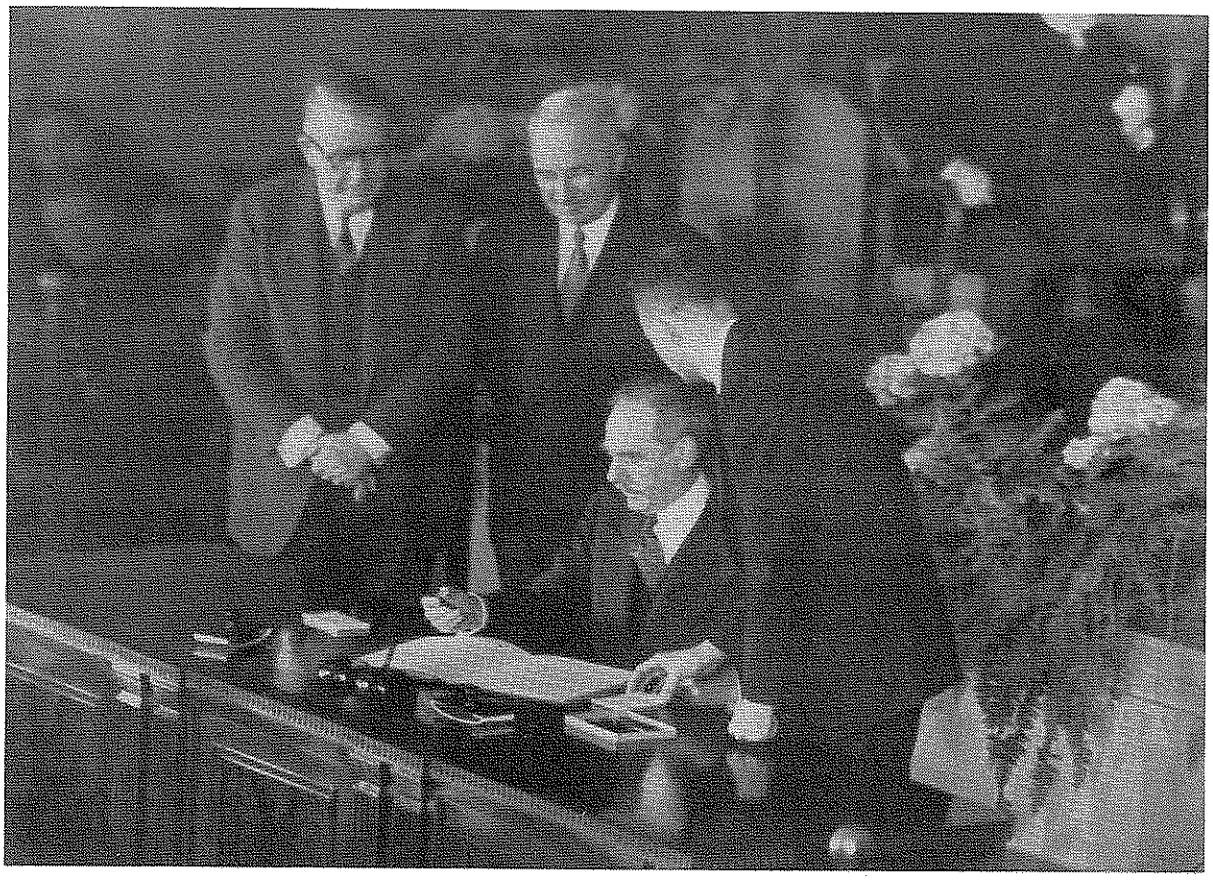
5. Negotiated the ANZUS pact of 1951 with Australia and New Zealand.

6. Made bilateral treaties with the Philippines in 1951; Japan in 1951; South Korea in 1953; The Republic of China in 1955.

7. Joined over 56 international organizations exclusive of international lending agencies and now helps support 22 international operating agencies at a cost of 1/3 of a billion dollars annually.

8. Attends over 500 international conferences annually covering subjects from atomic energy to zinc and conservation of Atlantic tuna to control of desert locusts.

Perhaps, indeed, as Harlan Cleveland has suggested, the goal of postwar American foreign policy was "to make the world safe for diversity."



With President Truman looking on, Secretary of State Dean Acheson signs the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on 4 April 1949.

IMPACT ON THE UNITED STATES

Lincoln Gordon has pointed out that the impact of World War II and the Cold War, and the emergence of new nations from old empires, when superimposed on a long-run

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>
> **Harlan Cleveland**

trend toward increased participation in international politics, have expanded the old dimensions and introduced major new dimensions into US foreign relations.[2] As never before in a so-called time of peace, international problems hold the attention and interest of the public, the Congress, and wide sectors of the Executive Branch of the National Government. Foreign policy looms ever larger in our elections, and recent Presidents have testified to the fact that most of their energies are devoted to foreign relations.

Administratively, the war and postwar years saw the creation of many new agencies. Old agencies were transformed with the addition of new branches. Other efforts concentrated on strengthening the structure and staffing of long-established departments. In yet other instances, new methods and new institutions were set up to handle critically urgent tasks—the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council being cases in point. Some agencies subsequently disappeared; others were consolidated into older departmental structures; and still others have become seemingly permanent. As a consequence of the changed position of America in the world many policy concerns, once considered exclusively domestic, now have international repercussions that must be taken into consideration.

Even as these things occurred, the achievement of independence in the former European colonial areas greatly increased the number of countries in which the overseas functions of the US Government were performed. According to the US Government Manual for 1971-72, the United States maintains official missions in 117 countries, more than double the number on the eve of World War II. In addition, we maintain 167 Consulate Generals, 9 Special Missions, 55 Consulates, 4 Special Offices, and 9 Consular Agencies. And in many of the regions where our official overseas representation is still just getting started, notably in Africa, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia, only a few Americans had previous acquaintance with the peoples and cultures, which are profoundly different from those of Europe or Latin America.

One indicator of the postwar problem of overseas representation is the sheer growth in size of civilian government employment abroad. According to Lincoln Gordon, if the Department of Defense and the closely related American Battle Monuments Commission and Veterans Administration are excluded, the number of US civilian employees—American and alien—in foreign countries expanded from 4,600 on the eve of World War II to almost 43,000 in mid-1963. Of this total, some 14,500 were American citizens.[3] Since then, with the expansion of the Peace Corps, the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.), and the Alliance for Progress, the figure has risen still more. The State Department alone now accounts for 11,000 to 12,000 persons, of which about 4,200 are Foreign Service officers, 3,500 are in administrative and consular positions, and another 3,500 are engaged in clerical and staff work.[4] A.I.D. employs 15,000 people, and the Peace Corps has trained from 15,000 to 20,000 who have served in some 40 countries.

While there is probably no way of measuring the corresponding increase in the number of Washington officials concerned with foreign affairs, it can safely be assumed to be in proportion. Even by mid-1963, the State Department (including the Agency for International Development) accounted for almost 10,000 employees in Washington, to which must be added large segments of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Agriculture, Treasury, and other agencies.

The State Department alone now receives up to 10,000 messages a day (over 400,000 telegraphic words) from 179 different political entities, and its desk officers see

from 250 to 350 documents daily. It also is in receipt of over 100,000 letters a year and sends out over 1,000 speakers a year to explain its policies. Its annual budget now exceeds $250 million. This is a far cry from the days in the 1880's when a Secretary of State could tell President Hayes that there were just two rules at the State Department: the first was that no business was conducted outside of business hours; and the second was that no business was conducted during business hours. No doubt there are some today who wish the same rules still applied.

The growth of the Defense Department has been even more spectacular. From a prewar Army of 150,000 and combined forces under 250,000, the present Defense Department employs approximately 3 million people with budgets running in excess of $75 billion. The Pentagon alone employs 25,000 people, including 350 generals and admirals. Care for veterans now costs $5 billion annually, more than an entire prewar military budget.

Today over 50 agencies of the government are involved in the formulation and execution of US foreign policy.

From 1951 on, there was a steady trend toward recognition that economic, technical, and military assistance would be important elements of American foreign policy for many years to come. Legislative authorization for these programs was provided annually under the title "Mutual Security Program" and the successive versions of Congressional endorsement of the long-term character of these efforts. There were variations in the proportions of military and economic assistance, in the regional distribution, and in the relative emphasis on international institutions and bilateral programs, but in one form or another, the programs continue, providing resources in the range of $3 to $7 billion per year. According to A.I.D., from 1945 to 1968 the total figures for foreign assistance and loans amounted to $130 billion, of which $38 billion went into military aid. The Chairman of the House Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee set the amount at more than $171 billion.

The Kennedy and Johnson Administrations gave even further emphasis to foreign assistance as a long-range instrument of American foreign policy. New direction was given to the program in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 by shifting toward long-run development assistance, while still preserving past military and defense support programs. A Peace Corps was begun which provided opportunities for thousands of young Americans to serve overseas as volunteers in technical-assistance work in developing countries. Within the Western Hemisphere, a 10-year Alliance for Progress was proposed by President Kennedy to accelerate badly needed economic and social development. This was subscribed to by 20 of the American Republics in the Charter of Punta del Este in August 1961.

Evidence for the spectacular growth of the US commitment in the field of foreign policy since World War II could be extended almost indefinitely. Suffice it to say that the revolution which began in the closing days of World War II had now come to fruition.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCE, CONSTANCY OF POLICY

In spite of all this change and growth it is well to remind ourselves that although the circumstances under which the American nation must conduct its foreign relations have altered radically, the purposes of the foreign policy remain remarkably constant.

John Quincy Adams, one of our greatest Secretaries of State, once remarked that "he knew of no change in policy, only of circumstances." Though circumstances have so changed now as to alter our historic nonalignment policy, the underlying purposes of the Nation have not.

Today, as before, the foreign policy for the United States is the vehicle for the accomplishment of goals set by (1) the

I KNOW NO CHANGE IN POLICY, ONLY OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

John Quincy Adams

country's historic traditions, (2) its current formulation of the national interest, and (3) by objective physical conditions.

The chief purpose of that foreign policy, as with that of any nation state in mid-20th century world society, is to preserve the independent existence of the nation—its territory, its people, its institutions, and its way of life. To achieve this purpose, a secure international environment was required, and in the postwar period the protection of the land, sea, and air approaches to the United States became a necessity. Protection against air attack was sought through the maintenance of military bases in Greenland and the Aleutians, plus an alliance with Canada. Protection against sea attack was undertaken by the establishment of bases in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and in the Caribbean Sea. The military and foreign policy army of the Government made commitments accordingly. The security of the Nation was widely thought to require that the country maintain either friendly and/or dominant relations with Canada and Mexico. For this reason, among others, the United States was a leader in the founding and subsequent activities of the Organization of American States which requires its members to come to the defense of any member nation attacked from inside or outside the Western Hemisphere. Because the security of the Western Hemisphere may not in and of itself be sufficient protection for the United States, the defense frontiers have been extended to other areas where dominance by an unfriendly country, such as the USSR or Communist China, would threaten to upset an existent balance of power and therefore jeopardize the security of the United States. The Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines were intended to extend a shield of military protection to such vital areas as Greece, Turkey, and the Middle East, where the countries concerned requested such aid. In essence, then, the United States, for the sake of its own security, sought to preserve a favorable balance of power in the Western Hemisphere and to maintain the existence of a balance in Europe and Asia which would deter the USSR and Communist China from establishing hostile hegemonies.[5]

POSITIVE GOALS

Although the protection of the independence and security of the Nation constituted the most fundamental goal of the United States in world affairs, it was by no means the only one. Other, more positive goals—the preservation of peace, the extension of democracy and freedom, the economic advancement of the Free World, and the promotion of general commerce—took on added significance once the minimal goal was partially realized. Those aspects of foreign policy mentioned in connection with the minimal goal do, of course, often promote more positive aims as well. Other efforts had an even more dual function—promoting both kinds—all of which points up the interrelatedness of the various aspects of US foreign policy. The more positive goals stemmed, at least in part, from the active faith that democratic institutions and the benefits of the modern-styled mixed economic system as they spread—would help build peace, stability, and growth. There was an American conviction that the Marxist-Leninist predictions about the failure of the capitalist system had been proved false. The conviction was that the system, operating in a climate of freedom, had accommodated itself by the development of devices for moderating satisfactorily the more violent vicissitudes of uncontrolled free enterprise and had progressed far toward eliminating the more blatant aspects of a class-based society. With this conviction, the United States supported (and supports) international economic agencies—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the technical assistance programs of the United Nations, reciprocal trade agreements, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and some 150 other organizations concerned with regulating and promoting commerce.

US programs of aid for allies and friends were primarily for economic improvement rather than military aid—$20 billion to Western Europe between July 1, 1945 and September 30, 1950, for example, and over $100 billion in economic aid since World War II. Aid programs became an integral part of US foreign policy. At the same time, private

American capital was encouraged to expand its investments abroad and, in the process, help in the opening up of new resources and the creation of industries through which foreign standards of living would advance. Classic postwar American foreign policy, in brief, encompassed the assumption that the continued economic progress of free people was the strongest possible force for peace and stability.

These more positive goals of US foreign policy were further advanced by the Government's participation in the United Nations, which it recognized as an indispensable, if somewhat fragile, agency in the preservation of peace. Experience demonstrated that the purpose and methods of this international organization coincided to a substantial extent with the major outlines of the policy of this country. While it was not as effective as America desired, it proved its usefulness as an instrument for deterring disruptive tendencies in such places as Korea, the Congo, and Cyprus; for dampening controversies such as the Egyptian-Israeli disputes; and for focusing public condemnation upon the oppression visited upon Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Other goals were also furthered by the advancement of the program to harness nuclear power to an "Atoms for Peace" agency within the United Nations; the test ban treaty; the non-proliferation treaty, by the dissemination of information through the United States Information Administration; and through efforts to expand cultural exchanges with Communist countries in the belief that exposure to American institutions and ideas would shake the certainty of the scientists, industrial managers, and educated classes of the Communist world.

The achievement of these postwar goals of American foreign policy in the latter half of the 20th century also demanded that domestic tranquility be maintained within the United States with a relatively high degree of unity behind the broad policies of the Government. An expanding economy of nearly full employment was thought requisite, as was an adequate defense establishment prepared for both general and limited wars.

One of the chief problems of US foreign policy, besides the maintenance of unity and prosperity at home and among her allies, involved its relations with the Communist nations. These nations, especially the Soviet Union and Communist China, were thought to constitute a serious threat to the security of the United States because of the fusion of a hostile revolutionary doctrine of Marxist-Leninist Communism with the enormous expanse of the Russian and Chinese states. Further, the USSR and China proved capable of producing intercontinental ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons of unprecedented power. These were augmented by the strength of historic Russian and Chinese nationalism which could constitute problems for America today, even without Communist ideology. Leaders of the Soviet Union regarded the "principal characteristics of our epoch" as "the emergence of socialism into a world system." They declared that "capitalism has proved impotent to hinder this worldwide process." Such sentiments, harnessed to a population of over 240 million on an area three times the size of the United States, and with the second largest industrial capacity of any nation, plus one of the largest standing armies in the world, alone constituted a major challenge to America. But when this challenge was compounded by that represented by a hostile Communist China with its enormous population, large land mass, expansive ambitions, and growing military power, then the dangers were thought to be immense.

Coupled with this problem came the anticolonial revolutions in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Nationalism in these areas was often utilized and exploited by Communists for their own purposes. The United States looked at the growth of these underdeveloped areas with a sympathy rooted in the memories of her own origins. But the problems of encouraging and aiding these justifiably impatient peoples to acquire the stability and strength they needed to preserve their independence, freedom, and the economic gains they desired so greatly—and yet to remain friendly with the United States—were incredibly complex, as the

United States learned to her sorrow in Vietnam.

How the United States resolved these problems, and others, determined the success and the failures of her foreign policy for the years following World War II.

THE REVOLUTION REVISITED

Now it seems justifiable to ask, as many observers, academic and otherwise, are doing:[6]

Has this revolution in foreign policy which propelled the United States into a place of prominence among the world's superpowers been a blessing or a curse–for the American people and for those affected by her leadership? Has it protected and enhanced our cherished institutions or has it weakened them and subtly made us into an imperialistic power, as Ronald Steel argues in *Pax Americana?*

Professor John Spanier in his book *American Foreign Policy Since World War II,*[7] juxtaposed two conflicting points of view by quoting Senator Fulbright, a leading congressional critic of US policy, and the renowned Canadian scholar of international affairs, Lionel Gelber.

Senator Fulbright said early in 1968.

> To that school of political thinkers who call themselves "realists" it is irrelevant sentimentalism to question the primacy of power politics in terms of its costs, purposes and human rewards. There is–so they tell us–no choice involved. . . .
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> Power politics is practiced under different names. . . . No empire stood longer and prouder than the British Empire a hundred years ago: today we are witnessing its sad, final sunset.
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> Can America escape the same fate? Accepting the gloomy determinism of the "responsibilities of power," in effect our present policymakers tell us that it cannot. They do not, of course, predict our decline and fall, only the extension of power, the drain of material and human resources, and the neglect of domestic requirements that precede and precipitate the fall of empires.
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> I do not think we are condemned to this. . . . Nations, like individuals, have some freedom of choice and America of all nations is equipped to exercise it. . . . If we do not, it will not be because history assigned to us an imperial role. It will be because we chose to believe such pompous nonsense, because power went to our heads like a superdose of LSD, leading us to betray our history and the purposes for which this nation was founded.

On the other hand, Mr. Gelber, writing to the *Yale Review* in the fall of 1967, saw the problem in the following light:

> I have yet to hear of any viable alternative to what the United States has been doing on the world stage. Even if free countries wished to reject American leadership in theory, they could not do so in practice: the United States herself cannot throw it off. For the American role is shaped by the nature of the world in which we live. And the nature of that world is ignored when there is talk about the American role as that of a self-appointed global gendarme. Such a jibe appears to suggest that a custodian of world order is needed. . . . But what it tends to suggest, above all, is that the militancy of others has not been the danger in our times. Caprice in leadership by the United States–that, presumably, is the source of trouble.
>
> Yet under altered conditions, the United States, as leader of the West, has only been taking a leaf out of the British book. Britain's own role, after all, was a "self-appointed" one when free communities (including the United States) developed overseas under the shelter of British sea power; when ideas of freedom took root among people not yet free; when, too, Britain stood alone between civilized society and its debasement by the Nazis. It is odd that in this day and age such truths have to be restated. They would not have to be restated if, at the heart of the West, a woeful incomprehension of the forces in play did not exist.

While many may doubt the lack of other alternatives and question some of the finer points raised by Senator Fulbright and Lionel Gelber, their words nevertheless confront us now with the main conflicting interpretations of the crisis of conscience and policy that sears the minds and souls of so many Americans and America's friends. Which view of the contemporary role of the United States in world politics is correct? Each must naturally determine this for himself. Yet on balance, it seems to many that while Senator Fulbright's strictures are useful warnings about the dangers involved in *The Arrogance of Power*,[8] Mr. Gelber's words about what George Ball has called *The Discipline of Power*[9] bespeak a truer and deeper meaning about the present implications of America's postwar revolution in foreign policy.

Yet irrespective of any personal views we may entertain, it is clear that a fierce struggle is going on in the American body politic about whether this revolution in foreign policy has been extended too far, whether it has become imperialistic and oppressive, and whether it is self-defeating and should be curtailed by a counterrevolution, returning policy to more restrictive boundaries. This struggle involved, but transcended, the election campaign of 1968.

As Spanier himself points out:

> As the war therefore continued without an end in sight, as it escalated and raised the specter of Chinese intervention, and as massive American fire power increasingly destroyed the country it was defending, pressure for an end to the war by deescalation mounted. Two candidates, Senators Eugene McCarthy and Robert Kennedy, contested President Johnson's renomination within the Democratic Party, but the President announced that he would not seek a second term. In the words of the astute political commentator Tom Wicker in the *New York Times*, Lyndon Johnson's tragedy was that he "came into office seeking a Great Society in America and found instead an ugly little war that consumed him." What Wicker failed to mention was that this was the second time a limited war and the resulting domestic divisions have consumed an incumbent President: Korea ensured that President Truman would not seek a second term as President, and it won the 1952 election for peace candidate Eisenhower. Thus the war and President Johnson's fate raised the fundamental question, which only the future can answer, whether the public would tolerate "another Vietnam or frontier war"—in short, whether it would continue to support an "imperial" policy or whether this support for the role America has played in the postwar world would erode.[10]

From 1968 to the present this debate grew and flourished and became a central, if not the core, issue of the Presidential election of 1972. In that election the proponents of a "come home" liberal isolationism were resoundingly defeated, at least at the presidential level. A strong majority of the electorate seemed to share Philip Quigg's misgivings that, "what is disturbing about much current comment is that it seems to analyze not what our responsibilities are but how we can contract out of them." Quigg further remarks in words that appear reflective of the country's mood:

> Those who see our blunders in Vietnam in moral terms and wish to retreat in sackcloth and ashes ignore the needs of a world smoldering with tensions and functioning at a fraction of its capacities. Those who see our failures as purely political and military and who now wish to redefine our national interest in the narrowest possible terms are taking a perilously parochial view of the world. Together they are denying responsibilities and necessities which we have long accepted, which others expect of us, and which Vietnam has in no way altered.[12]

While it is apparent that the advocates of a new "come home" philosophy have sustained a decisive short-run defeat, it is by no means

clear that they have lost the long-run debate. However, it seems probable that as changes continue to occur in our foreign policy that they will, at least until 1976, be along the lines of a more modest retrenchment policy such as outlined in the limitationist Nixon Doctrine. Whether the new revisionists will triumph in the long run, or whether the Nixon Doctrine or its successor can accommodate change without the withdrawal of the United States from a leadership position in world affairs, is a question that will influence the course of US and world history profoundly for decades to come.

In the fashioning of new post-Vietnam alternatives and/or consensus on foreign policy, it should not be forgotten that if the events of the past quarter-century are any index to the future, then the broad outlines of postwar US policy, forged in the fires of World War II and the postwar confrontation with the Communists, will in many and subtle ways continue to have a marked influence on the foreign policy of the American Nation for the foreseeable future.

There are many observers, among them the author, who are inclined to agree with George Liska's generalization that "America's foreign policy in the first two decades of the Cold War has been a striking success, judged by normal standards of national security and power."[13] While the Vietnam imbroglio has somewhat dimmed this optimistic picture, even a skeptic like Milovan Djilas has suggested, "The United States won the Cold War because of the internal disintegration of communism. Because you [the United States] remained strong you were able to accelerate this inevitable process. Nixon's Peking and Moscow trips were a result."[14] Djilas further points out:

> But the U.S. should neither overestimate nor underestimate that victory. You won because you are a nonideological country and thus were able to avoid a stalemate like that which prevailed between Christianity and Islam after their wars, a victory for neither side.
>
> The New Left and those influenced by it think the U.S. is wracked by crisis but the so-called crisis in American society is largely imaginary. Race and class and generation gaps do exist but there is no fundamental crisis. The crises you have are aspects of the difficulty of adjusting to the electronic and technological revolutions of our time.
>
> But you have emerged stronger on the world scene because the Communist world divided into factions while, at the same time, the United States succeeded in enlarging some of the basic democratic ideas—like individual human rights—thus helping to erode the Communist system.
>
> And economically you succeeded in pressing the Marxist world into collaboration with you. You proved the truth of your theory that no economic system can develop isolated from others. And you stayed strong enough.[15]

Djilas may be overstating the case when he described the United States as having "won" the Cold War and underestimating the dimensions of the domestic crisis which has forced the United States to seriously reconsider the size, scope, and dimensions of its overseas commitments. Nevertheless, he sees achievements in our postwar policy that have often escaped some of its more strident critics. These achievements were the subject of a speech last year by former Under Secretary of State U. Alexis Johnson in which he not unexpectedly defended our achievements against the now fashionable revisionist critics.

In his assessment, Johnson found:

1. Our bitterest enemies of three decades ago are now among our closest friends. And surely it is better to have strong friends than strong enemies.
2. The dreadful prospect of another world war, this time between the Communist and non-Communist powers, seems now more remote than at any time since the mid-1940's.
3. The American people have prospered to an unprecedented degree during this period.
4. More than 60 free nations came into being in the remarkable and largely peaceful

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL PHOTO

President and Mrs. Nixon shown while visiting the Great Wall during their February 1972 trip to China.

liquidation of some 400 years of colonial history. (Not a single one of these nations has chosen the Communist system.)

5. A new sense of the interdependence of nations has grown in only a few decades from being a bitterly disputed premise to a commonplace statement of the obvious.

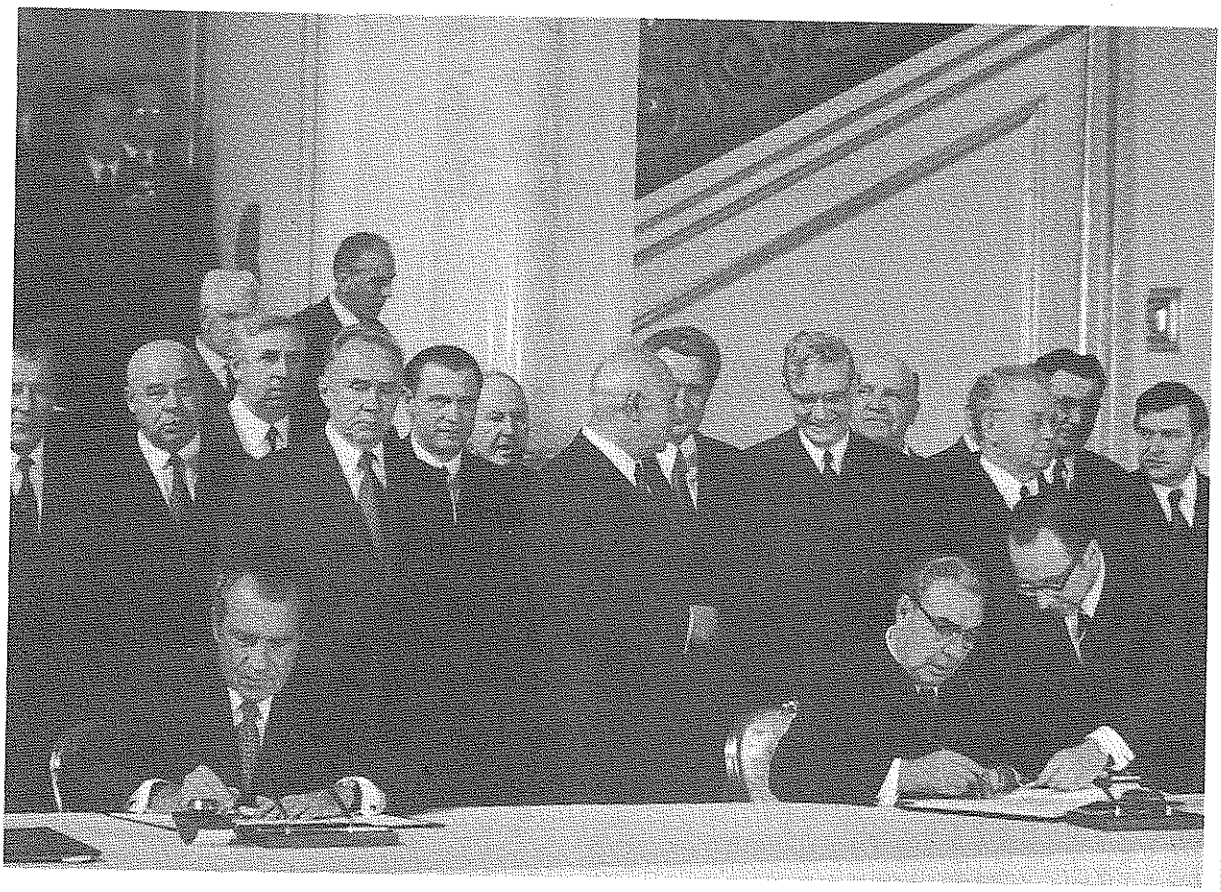
6. We have kept the atomic genie in his bottle and have made significant progress in establishing international limits which lessen the atomic threat to mankind—and enhance the potential of the atom's beneficial use.

7. We have made a singular contribution to the economic recovery of the world from World War II and have witnessed record levels of prosperity in large parts of the world.

8. We have helped create an international economic system which has resulted in an explosion in trade between nations on a scale unprecedented in history, with immeasurable benefits to the people of the world, including our own.[16]

As Johnson rightly observes, "These are not neglible accomplishments, they are, in fact, historic accomplishments. I do not think that we need be apologetic, or defensive about them."[17]

Certainly it is not necessary to agree with all that these men have to say about the accomplishments of postwar US foreign policy, but it is incumbent on critics to first rebut their arguments before dismissing them out of hand. All too often in the "Great Debate" over the past, present, and future



WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL PHOTO

President Nixon and General Secretary Brezhnev signing an agreement during the President's summit visit to Moscow in May 1972. The document opens new possibilities for the development of peaceful relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between the USA and the USSR.

contours of US policy, these beneficent results of the mid-century revolution in American foreign policy have been overlooked, neglected, or ignored.[18]

NOTES

1. W. T. R. Fox, *The American Study of International Relations,* Studies in International Affairs Number 6, Institute of International Studies, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1968, pp. 16-17.

2. Vincent M. Barnett, Jr., ed., *The Representation of the United States Abroad,* Rev. ed., New York: Praeger, 1965. Here in the next several pages I have followed Lincoln Gordon's treatment as presented in his chapter on "The Growth of American Representation Overseas," pp. 13-46.

3. *Ibid.,* p. 17.

4. *The New York Times,* 8 August 1972.

5. Bernard Gordon, *Toward Disengagement in Asia: A Strategy for American Foreign Policy,* New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969. See his excellent chapter on "Interests, Objectives, and Policies," pp. 31-43.

6. See, for example, J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power,* New York: Vintage, 1966; Gabriel Kolko, *The Roots of American Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Power and Purpose,* Boston: Beacon Press, 1969; Harry Magdoff, *The Age of Imperialism: The Economics of US Foreign Policy,* Washington, D. C.: The Monthly Review Press, 1969; George McGovern, *A Time of War, A Time of Peace,* New York: Random House, 1968; Ronald Steel, *Pax Americana,* New York: The Viking Press, 1967; Robert W. Tucker, *The Radical Left and American Foreign Policy,* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1971, and *A New Isolationism,* Washington, D. C.: Potomac Associate Books.

7. John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy Since World War II,* 4th rev. ed., New York: Praeger, 1971, Preface, pp. IX, X.

8. J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power,* New York: Vintage, 1966. See also his *The Crippled Giant: American Foreign Policy and Its Domestic Consequences,* New York: Random House, 1972.

9. George Ball, *The Discipline of Power,* Boston: Little, Brown, 1968.

10. Spanier, *op. cit.,* pp. 272-273.

11. Philip W. Quigg, *America the Dutiful: An Assessment of U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II,* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971, p. 27.

12. *Ibid.*

13. George Liska, *Imperial America: The International Politics of Primacy,* The Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Studies in International Affairs Number 2, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1967. Foreword.

14. Quoted by C. L. Sulzberger from Interview with Milovan Djilas, *New York Times,* 18 August 1972.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Washington Post,* 15 August 1972.

17. *Ibid.*

18. See Charles Gati, "Another Grand Debate: The Limitationist Critique of American Foreign Policy," *World Politics,* October 1968, pp. 133-151; and J. L. Richardson, "Cold War Revisionism: A Critique," *World Politics,* Summer 1972, pp. 579-612. ■