AMERICA'S RELATIONS WITH DICTATORS

by

DR. ANTHONY L. WERMUTH

This paper confines itself to those eruptions of moral outrage that address a single theme among the thousand themes of which American foreign policy is comprised: "Why does the United States continue to prop up dictators around the globe?"

In some respects, the question may appear simple-minded, equivalent to asking "Why does the United States negotiate with foreign representatives who are right-handed, or negotiate on weekdays or before lunch?" Upon reflection, the question does not seem so simple.

The question is often asked in contexts indicating it is asked not out of curiosity or innocence, but out of ideology. Frequently, the form of the question expresses one recurrent American trait: moralistic denunciation (quite different from morality). A judgment is already included, as in the old cliché question: "Have you stopped beating your wife?"

Here are a few examples of recent interrogation or allegation along this line.

Thomas M. Franck and Edward Weisband wrote in *The New York Times* about then-Ambassador Moynihan's vigorous defense of American foreign policy:

> To rally the forces behind the tattered flag of human dignity and individual worth is a splendid endeavor. Yet [the United States representative] must also insure that he is seen to carry the banner with clean hands. If he cannot persuade Washington and American business to stop subsidizing fascism in Spain and Chile or racist regimes in Southern Africa, his crusade will merely appear naive or hypocritical.[1]

Columnist Clayton Fritchey wrote in *The Washington Post* about the American introduction into the United Nations of a draft resolution on amnesty for political prisoners:

> It sounds great at first, until others start asking why the United States for so many years has supported so many despotic governments that have specialized in

locking up, torturing, and killing their political opponents.[2]

Early in 1976, Mr. Ramsey Clark and three colleagues denounced conditions in Spain in a letter to *The New York Times*:

> ...We are particularly outraged by the arrest of 55 lawyers gathered in a private home, followed by a police assault on 150 attorneys and others who peacefully petitioned for the release of their colleagues....

Mr. Clark and colleagues then made it clear that what they were really denouncing was "the 'traditional' US policy of supporting dictatorships anywhere and everywhere."[3]

CATEGORIZING FOREIGN REGIMES

Is there some universal set of standards by which to judge American styles in dealing with foreign regimes? Are all regimes in the world headed either by dictators or by democrats? Does one deal with all dictators in an identical way?

Actually, there are about 160 regimes in control of the nations of the world, and no two are exactly alike, whether monarchies, republics, tyrannies, juntas, oligarchies, theocracies, or whatever.

In order to manage the data, let me suggest a typology, a categorization of the 160 regimes into 4 groups: Communist totalitarians, non-Communist totalitarians, democracies, and the others—a mixed lot, mostly authoritarians. Can we establish that different patterns of relationship characterize America's dealings with each group? Halpern suggests that:

> ...it may be possible... to distinguish among (1) countries which, despite tyranny (or its obverse, instability), are yet some distance from internal warfare involving extremists, or foreign adventurism inviting aggression; (2) countries which, like Ataturk's Turkey, have chosen an authoritarian road that is intended to lead to democracy; and (3) countries like the Union of South Africa, Iran or Jordan, which are clearly heading for the kind of catastrophic internal or external explosion which will make intervention by outside powers unavoidable.[4]

Obviously, considerable differences obtain within each group. Even among the Communist totalitarian regimes, there have been basic differences among the regimes of Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Kim Il Sung, Ho Chi Minh, and their ideological look-alikes.

THE UNPROPPED COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANS

Despite the uniqueness of each nation in a number of respects, this is one category of dictators which is emphatically not propped up by the United States.

I must say, at the outset of discussion of this category, that I decline to diabolize Communism or Communists; I do not care to encourage a rabid obsession that regards every occurrence adverse to America as Communist-generated, or that regards every Communist challenge as requiring renewal of the Cold War, or as threatening our immediate survival. All kinds of social changes are

Dr. Anthony L. Wermuth joined the Strategic Studies Institute in 1974. He holds master's degrees from Columbia University in English and George Washington University in International Affairs and a doctorate from Boston University in Political Science. A US Military Academy graduate, Dr. Wermuth's military assignments included brigade command; Assistant for Central Europe, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs; and Military Assistant (Public Affairs) to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He spent seven years on the US Military Academy and US Army War College faculties. Following retirement, he served for seven years as Director, Social Science Studies, Center for Advanced Studies and Analyses, Westinghouse Electric Corporation. He has written many articles on civil-military affairs in professional journals and is a member of a number of professional associations. This article will appear in the book *Strategies, Alliances, and Military Power: Changing Roles*, to be published in April 1977 by A. W. Sijthoff, Leyden, The Netherlands.

challenging us that have nothing to do with the Communists. And all the important give and take in world dynamics is not restricted to the Russian-American dyad.

What common characteristics identify this group? First of all, without diabolizing the movement, we observe that Communist regimes share the common characteristic of operating on a number of repressive principles that are abhorrent to most Americans.

Secondly, one notes, it is now fashionable in some quarters to observe that the Communist movement is no longer monolithic (to be sure, it never was literally 100 percent monolithic, but it was close enough to achieve the same effect), as though that statement established some premise that the movement is no longer an adversary, or no longer powerful, or no longer dangerous. When opportunities occur to diminish the strength of the United States, or to pry another geographical unit and its population loose from the non-Communist world, whatever the disagreements may be among Moscow, Peking, Hanoi, and so on, the whole Communist world more or less "monolithically" provides the goods of war to the Communist side of the conflict, as in Vietnam. And, of course, the worldwide sophisticated Communist propaganda network is always more or less at top efficiency—grinding out gratuitous "monolithic" denunciations of the free world. These are marks, not only of substantial linkage, but also of an unrelenting (though prudent) expansionist ethic.

Because of its great power, and its opposition to the Communist system of internal and external operation, America became and remains the principal obstacle in the path of Communist objectives (however fragmented and variously "un-monolithic" those objectives may be in the current world).

The writings of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, and others, reaching the West, supplementing a number of other indicators, testify to the emergence of definite cracks in the Iron Curtain. They also substantiate the continuance of many rigidities. Do we disbelieve those Russians, who confirm our intelligence data? Shall we pretend that they do not know what they are talking about, and that, for example, Jane Fonda's opinion is much more reliable on what the Communist movement is still about?

How much has been eroded? In a 1975 book generating a furor in European political circles, Jean-Francois Revel wrote:

> ... Following the lead of the Communist Party in Italy, the French Communists have been trying to show that they are now dedicated to democratic principles and a pluralistic society and that they are independent of Moscow. . . .[5]

At Helsingor, Denmark, on January 18, 1976, at a conference of 18 European Socialist Parties, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of West Germany opposed cooperation with Communist parties; but in a realistic fashion, he observed:

> ... the Communists are large parties in France and Italy, and they won't disappear just because we think their strong appeal to the voters is a bad thing. It would be wrong if by our conduct we contributed to halting the developments that have led to a break-up of the former monolithic block of communism.[6]

One journalist observed in February 1976 that "many anti-Communist Europeans see a historic opportunity if Moscow loses control of the international Communist movement . . . ."[7] (Obviously, "many Europeans" regard Moscow as being still in control of the movement.)

Another journalist reported:

> ... In November, the French and Italian [Communist] parties signed a common charter endorsing participation in a pluralistic political system as opposed to the one-party system preserved in the Soviet Union since 1917 . . . .
>
> Mr. Marchais [leader of the Communist Party of France] renewed his call for his party to drop one of the most sacred Marxist-Leninist doctrines, the dictatorship of the proletariat.[8]

These are hopeful signs; but they primarily comprise words. Non-Communist states remain skeptical, waiting for deeds. Wrote Flora Lewis of these movements:

> . . . Almost all non-Communist Europeans share with Washington suspicion of the depth and sincerity of the claims of Western Communists to have cast off the chains of Moscow and to have been converted to political democracy . . . .[9]

Even an editorial in *The New York Times* expressed skepticism:

> . . . Marchais and his comrades are trying to jump on the bandwagon of national Communism which they denounced—in servile subjection to Moscow—for decades . . . .
>
> National Communism, it must be remembered, really surfaced with Stalin's explusion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform in the late nineteen forties. It was the central issue in the Polish mutiny and in the Hungarian revolution against Soviet rule in 1956, as well as in the Soviet-Chinese break in the early nineteen sixties. And it played a key role in the 'Prague spring' of 1968 which ended with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. In all those historic tests of the Communist movement, the French Communist Party was one of Moscow's most ardent ideological supporters.
>
> It may well be that hunger for power, rather than genuine ideological conversion, is at the root of the French Communist change. Nevertheless, it is some kind of advance when what was formerly one of the most orthodox of the world's Communist parties finds it advisable to present a more flexible exterior and to proclaim greater independence from Moscow. Some day there may even be deeds to demonstrate that the French party really does operate on its own.[10]

Where are the actions that might, over time, contribute to persuading other states that the Communists now desire to substitute cooperation for their well-known goals of subversion and conquest? What are the Soviets, then, doing in Angola, and Portugal, and the Middle East, and Somalia? For that matter, as the Soviets are still heard insisting, for example, that it is only right for the Israelis to abandon Arab territory captured in the 1967 war, what are the Soviets still doing in whole states "captured" during or soon after World War II—Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria, Rumania, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania? If the Soviet Union is relentlessly determined to support movements of "national liberation" everywhere, how is it that the Soviets pride themselves on supporting "liberation" in Angola and Vietnam but not in Hungary and Czechoslovakia?

Most Americans are quite clear about the threat's still being there, clearly desirous of damaging American interests if it could get away with it; most Americans have confidence that it can be contained by the United States and its Allies so long as they remain alert to prevent greater aggrandizement of Communist power—monolithic or not.

Therefore, on one side, the United States continues to be open, as always, to genuine cooperation with Communist states and all other states. It remains opposed to aggressive maneuvers of Communist states—not because those states are undemocratic, or because they are totalitarian, or even because they are Communist in ideology and system. (The United States has said repeatedly that it would raise no objection to the installation of a Communist regime honestly elected via open, free elections by any full electorate.)

In sum, the primary reasons for US resistance and opposition to propping up dictators of the Communist variety are these:

- Communist regimes are specifically and relentlessly anti-American, in deed as well as word.
- They are not merely individually threatening countries. In many attributes, they are still linked together, combining and multiplying the power of many countries into a "monolithic" accretion of power.

• The Communist movement threatens America not with ideas but with actions.

Thus, the self-chosen guidelines for American dealings with Communist totalitarians are not mere whims. America's stance of resistance and refusal to "prop up" Communist dictators is not an option it selects automatically out of willfulness, or perversity, or ideology, or distorted perception.

THE SOMETIMES-PROPPED NON-COMMUNIST TOTALITARIANS

In many particulars, the reprehensible features of internal orientations of Communist totalitarian regimes are replicated in all totalitarian regimes, whether representative of the Right or the Left, whether fascist or Communist or maverick. Such internal regimes are universally though variously deplored, denounced, or despised by democratic and semidemocratic societies, and on occasion by benign authoritarian regimes.

Is there any basis for difference in US responses to totalitarian nations, either in propping up or in nudging down? If so, what is the difference? The critical basis is the difference between internal and external policies, between internal and external activities, and, within the category of external relations, the differences among helpful, neutral, and harmful acts—not merely statements or abstractions, but actions.

In some non-Communist states, the totalitarianism or authoritarianism is not maximal but at some lower or intermediate level of intensity, and applied only in selected fields, ways, or degrees. Their rigidities do not constitute the whole of some systems. We deplore their totalitarian aspects, some of which are total—as in Communist societies—and some of which are not. In general, such nations constitute a category to be distinguished from Communist dictatorships, at least on the following grounds:

• They remain individual, separate states, not linked together in threatening aggregated power.

• Some have considerable power, as single-nation power goes; but the scale of even the most powerful constitutes no real threat to the United States even if the power were directed by anti-American orientations.

• Possibly the greatest difference between Communist totalitarians and other totalitarians is that most of the latter are not anti-American. They may argue with America over particular issues, but neither in word or deed, so far as we can tell, do most of them express or intend harm to the United States. They may be repressive in relation to their own peoples; but, for various reasons, many admire America and like Americans and American ways. Some among them may not like American ways, but do respect American power.

• Some other totalitarian and authoritarian states may not be pro-American, but they are, for various reasons, anti-Communist. To the extent that individual nations can affect such an issue, they have no intention of permitting aggrandizement of the Communist-controlled portion of the world.

• Some totalitarian countries control certain critical resources or geographical features, primarily involving valuable strategic location related to countering certain Communist-world potentialities for damaging America or the West.

Suppose an American looks, for example, at South Africa—what does he see? Well, it depends largely on what he is looking for. Some Americans will see only the censorious characteristic, *apartheid*, and nothing but *apartheid*, and insist that for Americans nothing else matters.

But there are a great many other things about South Africa, favorable characteristics that also matter very much in international strategic equations, such as high literacy; advanced modern civilization; high skills; high standards of performance in economic, military, professional fields; strategic location; physical power; largely Western values; English-speaking; self-support, not dependent on anyone else; not linked in power aggregation with others; achievement of position through sweat, blood, and brains; and similar attributes.

No doubt, a substantial majority of Americans, still in process of eliminating racial discrimination from our own society, would condemn *apartheid*. However, no matter how agonizingly the single factor of *apartheid* looms in current social analyses, it does not and should not constitute the sole basis or the overriding criterion for determining total American relationships with South Africa. It is to be noted, for example, that several black African regimes have come around to the perspective that, despite *apartheid*, they themselves are now willing to do certain kinds of business with South Africa. The US Government has condemned *apartheid* in numerous public statements and official communications to the South African Government, but we maintain full diplomatic relations with that country.

There is also one additional notable and transcendent trait of South Africa that necessarily looms very large in American policy: South Africa has no enmity towards the United States. It happens in this decade that we are not so besieged by foreign admirers that we can afford gratuitously to alienate another nation that wishes us well. C. L. Sulzberger cited a late 1975 informal estimate among American diplomats that in the UN General Assembly at that time there were represented about 35 nations friendly to us, about 35 neutral but rather hostile, and about 70 "sworn adversaries."[11]

Thus, while some general pattern of relationships can be worked out to govern American dealings with non-Communist totalitarians, each nation presents a largely unique but still complex challenge to be sorted out on its own merits, with heavy emphasis on reality and practicality. Particularly difficult cases for American policy involve those countries that fall captive to totalitarian regimes, despite having previously enjoyed democratic traditions, and, perhaps, amicable relations with the United States over extended periods of time.

Incidentally, in relation to supporting certain selected regimes, it should not be difficult to discern that, in special circumstances, support of one dictator may blunt another dictator—or perhaps both of them.

THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONS

US interaction with democratic regimes poses no domestic ideological inhibitions for Americans. However, for those who seem offended by having to deal with anything but democracies, it is unfortunate indeed that so few nations possess valid credentials. On December 17, 1975, US Ambassador Moynihan, addressing the UN General Assembly, noted that "most of the governments represented in the General Assembly do not themselves govern by consent [of their citizens]"; he asserted that there are now "28, possibly 29, functioning representative democracies in the world"—and one of them, Switzerland, is not a member of the United Nations.[12]

Freedom House, at the start of 1976, estimated that of the world's 158 countries and 4.06 billion people:

- 1,823 million people in 65 nations are "Not Free."
- 1,436 million people in 53 nations are "Partially Free."
- 804 million people in 40 nations, mostly in North America and Western Europe, are "Free."[13]

It is sad but true that not a great deal of the world's strategic real estate is currently controlled by democratic states, simply because, among several reasons, there are so few of them. Thus, if one insists that the United States deal only with democracies, our foreign policy cupboard is likely to be nearly bare a good bit of the time.

THE MIXED OTHERS—MOSTLY AUTHORITARIANS

This fourth category of nations is the largest and most varied. Most nations in it are in some stage of authoritarianism. There may well be, for example, some direct correlation between the degree of democracy prevalent in a society and its degree of economic and social progress; but the connection is not readily provable. Many experts do insist that

only via strong internal centralized control can developing countries emerge from backwardness and stagnation, and the argument makes much sense. Another expert insists that only two kinds of government are feasible in poor countries, and both are authoritarian; one type seeks to perpetuate inequitable elite advantages, and the other type seeks gradual but genuine social reform.[14]

Practically all Third World countries have small, authoritarian elites, no middle classes, and masses of the poor. Moreover, among the world's poorer nations, both old nations that were never colonies and new nations emerging from former colonial status, few were *ever* in the hands of democratic regimes or developed democratic cultures. Their regimes have invariably been authoritarian; they have never experienced any other.

Barbara Ward is one of those who insist that to operate even basic democracy successfully, large numbers of literate, trained administrators must be available.[15] Probably, many other elements are likewise essential: at least minimal numbers of competent leaders at several levels of participation; articulate leaders and electorate; some moderate level of universal literacy; at least minimally adequate networks of communications; a press encouraged to be, and committed in large part to, society's positive interests and not to ideology or aggrandizement of itself or elites; at least moderate per capita economic prosperity, making modest degrees of diversity profitable; and nation-building, encouraging innovation. But liberty places responsibilities on individuals that people in some stages of different cultures do not want. They may distrust their own ignorance, or fear to question the dicta of their priests, or in other ways fail to enthuse over democratic visions. They may resist change, and prefer stability. Instead of autonomy they may prefer a system of godfathers. Accordingly, even to assist such peoples, one must in many instances do business with dictators.

VARIETIES OF INTERACTIONS AND "PROPPINGS UP"

Nations for centuries have had ambassadors at foreign capitals to express their specific advice or demands. While the types of objectives of relations among states have not changed much (such as alliance, trade, and threat), the range, scale, and means for intervention have increased enormously. Literacy, transportation, communications, political awareness—all are proliferating; so that there are now seemingly endless varieties of ways and means to influence another nation's course.

There are, of course, a host of positive and negative ways short of armed attack, in which support or propping-up may be rendered, or in which coercive measures in the form of intervention, interference, or attempted threat might be brought to bear against another state, its personality, or its political, economic, and cultural elements.

We need a set of more precise terms to identify the various ways in which one nation can project influence into another. Halpern observes:

> It is an illustration of the unstable character of the present international system that there is no agreement on the definition of the two acts most likely to destroy the sovereignty, independence and equality of any participant of the system, or perhaps even the system itself—namely, aggression and intervention. That is not to say that there is no agreement whatever. There is enough agreement to make the system endure; not sufficient agreement to make it stable . . . .
>
> . . . We live, more now than ever, in an interdependent world . . . . A great power intervenes in the domestic realm of other states when it says yes and when it says no; indeed by its sheer existence . . . .[16]

The characters and values of foreign regimes, as noted, vary widely. Some foreign countries have pursued policies that one or more subgroups of Americans have found distasteful on religious, psychological, economic, social, theoretical, or other grounds. America has supported some regimes (and declined to support others) that condoned a host of practices considered controversial or repugnant, including capital

punishment, euthanasia, ancestor worship, the killing of bulls, the smiting of seals, castration, sterilization, polygamy, drug usage, child betrothal, wholesale race or class discrimination, and many other practices that some Americans disapprove of. It is important to realize that among the Americans who disapprove are often included American decisionmakers themselves, who had to choose workable policies, and American representatives, who had to negotiate them.

In passing, it may be worth noting, for the benefit of Americans who are quick to denounce any practice of others that they find distasteful, that despite American amenities there exist also a number of widespread practices tolerated in America but repugnant to certain foreign societies, such as hedonism and blatant exploitation of sex; contempt for authority; preeminence in incidence of vandalism, homicide, and other crimes against the person; widespread personal possession of guns; self-glorification; appalling waste, in a world of shrinking resources; commercialization; and irresponsibility of sectors of the media. Would it be conceded by any Americans that foreign disapproval of such characteristics would justify denunciation or attempts by foreigners to intervene in American internal affairs or to exclude the United States from some facet of international relations?

We have difficulty, indeed, in understanding ourselves, in predicting the outcome of complex factors which partly assist but partly obstruct desired outcomes, in predicting our own future, in achieving optimum mixes of policy that satisfy the many strands and interest groups in America. It is difficult to identify what is best for ourselves. How much more difficult it is to select what is best for other societies![17]

Who are we to insist that we know better than they do what is best for them, how they ought to perceive external pressures, where their interests lie, what pace of change they should adopt, and how best to organize their political and economic affairs? How would we know what trade-offs between personal sacrifice and national progress they should prefer? Democracy may not be—indeed, apparently is not—suitable for elementary stages of social organization. Perhaps democracy is acceptable as a universal goal; but until different societies reach their respective "critical mass" stages of development, democratic practices may be not only premature but counterproductive.

Ultimately, the primary criterion must be the same one later discussed in relation to recognition of new regimes: effectiveness. Regardless of political cast or the state of internal social justice, does or does not the regime in question have effective capability to govern?

In judging on the basis of its internal practices the desirability of supporting a foreign regime, the United States may be faced with a difficult choice in ambivalent circumstances. The real choice, as so frequently occurs in human affairs, may not lie between a good course and an evil course; that choice poses no insuperable problem. The great dilemmas involve choice among several courses, each of which, dependent upon the perspectives and perceptions of observers, involves different kinds and degrees of "evil."

It has been essential to distinguish between external affairs and internal affairs.

Thus, in international affairs, the principle has long been accepted that, while the external affairs of a nation involve other nations, the internal affairs of a nation are no other nation's concern. President Kennedy underlined both points in the last paragraph of his letter answering Chairman Khrushchev's protest against our Cuban crisis intervention:

> I believe, Mr. Chairman, that you should recognize that free people in all parts of the world do not accept the claim of historical inevitability for Communist revolution. What your government believes is its business; what it does in the world is the world's business.[18]

Rooted in this and related causes, there has existed, historically, a powerful barrier to American intervention in the internal affairs of other nations: the provision of

international law prohibiting such interference or intervention. This provision has not deterred Communist organizers and activists, frequently posing (and occasionally acting) as genuine homegrown revolutionaries against repressive local elites. Most local masses have not understood in time that, when they follow Communist cadres, they merely exchange one set of repressive masters for another.

America, supporting the concept of rule of law, has generally respected this provision of international law. This is not to say that the United States has not intervened; for it has done so, particularly in Latin America, in three kinds of situations:

- To restore order, when chaos threatened or arrived in the Western Hemisphere.
- To forestall European intervention or colonialization, when a power vacuum involved some other nation in the Western Hemisphere (thus, rather than exploiting the endangered nation's vulnerability, American policy preserved the nation's sovereignty).
- When invited to intervene by the concerned nation itself.

Almost invariably, and mostly sooner rather than later, American intervention was terminated when order was restored and as viable administration gathered momentum. Of course, American interests were usually involved, though of two kinds. One kind comprised direct American interests; such actions tended to be understood, if not applauded, by pragmatic regimes of all stripes. The other kind comprised certain interests and responsibilities of the United States, as a superpower, for some degree of world order.

One feels that any discussion of interactions, or of up-propping, is incomplete these days without at least mentioning the proliferating means and methods, brought about by technological and social change, for projecting influence from people to people, overpassing governments, and rendering more complex and difficult adherence to the noninterference principle.

A number of significant changes are in progress or in the offing, appearing to presage weakening of distinctions between domestic and foreign policy. To cite one illustration, Senator Henry Jackson and others have applied pressures with some success on American-Soviet negotiations, apparently benefiting the efforts of Jews to be released from the USSR in order to emigrate to Israel. In another example, the US Senate, on February 18, 1976, voted 60-30 to pass the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976; one provision of the Act would terminate transfers of American-made weapons to nations "judged to have violated the human rights of their citizens."[19]

One is entitled to some unease about this provision. In instances of flagrant cruelty, of well-documented internal repression of such extreme degree as to "stink to high heaven," a foreign nation may well decline to do business with a particular regime involved (and thus intervene via inaction). But extreme conditions tend to simplify policymaking; most problems fall within extremes, along spectra exhibiting many intersections of many complex factors. Which human rights will be involved? What degree of violation is intended to result in prohibition? If we could be sure of two things—the reliability of our data, and the participation of Solomon in judging net truth and virtue in each instance—we might come closer to justifying such "negative intervention," even in violation of international law.

In any event, the former uncertain state of separation of internal and external aspects of issues is being further eroded, by many forces, including such changes as these:

- Instant worldwide communications via satellites, TV, and radio.
- Immediate means of international give and take constantly available at standing and ad hoc international conferences, organizations, and other agencies.
- A great variety of economic interventions and proppings-up are becoming available and more effective, such as interactions on oil allocations, and oil prices.
- The government of one nation can today, in many instances, even appeal over the head of government to the people of another nation. One notes, for example, full-page

advertisements in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* of September 24, 1974, headed "The President of Venezuela Responds to the President of the United States." The issue was oil policy. Had the Venezuelan President's real purpose been merely to address the American President, he certainly did not need to buy a page of *The New York Times* to do so.

• It is now feasible for private groups to intervene in other nations, in contradiction to official national policy. Criminals and terrorists have demonstrated that they can intervene and even intimidate some societies and governments into acceding to their perverse wishes. For another example, Prime Minister Harold Wilson of the United Kingdom denounced in December 1975 "misguided Irish-American supporters of the Irish Republican Army";[20] and the Prime Minister of Ireland, in addressing a joint session of Congress in mid-March of 1976, asked that the US Government put a stop to this form of intervention in Irish affairs.

BASIC US INTERESTS

Careful definition becomes imperative in modern times when a charge is leveled, for example, that "the United States is propping up dictators." What US interests are involved, and what means of up-propping are employed?

The primary interest of the United States is exactly the same as every other nation's; it is precisely what Dean Acheson said it was when he was asked: "To survive," he responded, "and, if possible, to prosper."

One may argue—gingerly, for analogies can be tricky—that the hierarchy of interests of a nation can to some extent be perceived to resemble the universal hierarchy of personal interests that Abraham Maslow postulated for individuals. Maslow's five-step hierarchy of interests and motivations agrees with age-old priorities in establishing that self-preservation is the first law of nature. Maslow's basic step has first priority among all steps: the most fundamental interest of man is survival and the means to survival: life, food, warmth, shelter, healing. (To the contrary, moral codes do not give high place to self-interest; but in the practical arenas of living, self-preservation comes first.) As Adam Smith wrote in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776):

> It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner but from their regard to their self-interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity, but to their self-love . . . .[21]

In Maslow's terms (endorsed here to the extent that they appear to reflect real life) other considerations and aspects of self-interest come later: security, esteem, prestige, self-actualization. While no analogy is ever completely parallel, one may reasonably draw one obvious analogy between the identical first priorities of individuals and nation-societies: to exist, to survive, to endure. Thus, the security of the nation is the first and foremost of each and every nation's interests. Moral considerations take second place.

William Bundy recently identified three objectives of American foreign policy: the physical security of the United States; the maintenance of an international environment in which the United States can survive and prosper; and, somewhat unique to the United States, the exertion of American temporizing influence, by word, example, or action, upon the more repressive governments in the world.[22]

Accordingly, can there be any quarrel with consensus that, similar to the primary goal of every other nation on earth, the overwhelming objective of, for example, American aid (economic, military, or other) to foreign countries is to preserve American national security and prosperity? This primary objective does not preclude incorporation of other objectives among our "package of objectives" influencing our support of any particular nation or group of nations (e.g., NATO). It does not preclude generosity, humanitarianism, or encouragement to democracy and social justice in appropriate circumstances. The United States has frequently incorporated

such values in its agreements. But there should be no confusion about the primary objective. As one writer points out:

> . . . there are those who believe that, in the reality of the power struggle between the United States and its two principal rivals, the U.S.S.R. and China, respect for international law, self-determination, and the like must come second. Such principles will, in Dean Acheson's phrase . . . serve as 'ethical restraint but will yield to higher necessities.'[23]

Needless to say, the outcomes of these dilemmas are not often crystal clear in advance, and favorable outcomes cannot be guaranteed. No one can read the future. Some recipient countries are not sure what they themselves will do. We make mistakes, as do our adversaries. We win some, and we lose a few.

MIT political scientist Lincoln Bloomfield has expostulated:

> The question for the United States is whether it is to be permanently cast as the enemy of all new movements, tendencies, and historical forces . . . . Nothing in the US Constitution says we have to be allies of small-time dictatorships, one-party police states, and unpopular oligarchies, *unless* we are in a war in which our very existence is at stake . . . .[24]

On the other hand, the Constitution does not stand mute about the defense and security of the United States. It contains no requirement to refrain from cooperation—or alliance, if need be—with any state in a position to protect or further American interests, whether or not that state is a democracy or a tyranny, benign or cruel, radical or reactionary, moral or immoral or amoral.

All public officials, elected and appointed—the President, members of Congress, cabinet ministers, civilian and military officials, and many others—commit themselves, by taking a public oath, to defend the Constitution against both external and internal enemies.

Neither the President nor anyone else, elected or appointed, is committed by his oath of office to spread democracy around the world, or to be generous or stingy with America's wealth, or to educate or criticize foreigners about their faults or virtues, or to choose morality (whose morality?) above all other considerations, or to favor foreign nations according to the preferences of powerful pressure groups in America, or to support the Right or the Left anywhere in the world, or to see to it that foreign regimes treat their people the way even most Americans think they should. The sole overriding commitment of public officials is to the security of this nation, "to defend the Constitution against all enemies, foreign and domestic"—a clear and stark priority.

Emphasis on the criterion of self-interest does not connote that the United States believes it has any right to ride roughshod over the interests of any other nation, or that America imagines that it can afford to engage in relations with other states, big or small, without morality, equity, or compassion.

THE AMERICAN STYLE OF INTERACTION

American policy toward any one nation is never conceived in a germfree laboratory or in a vacuum. Any one major American policy must emerge from some resolution among a host of conflicting forces and interests, including critical American interests; peripheral interests; perceived and stated interests of the regime and the people of the other nation involved; interests of allies and clients of the United States and the other nations; interests of other third parties; the interests of world (and possibly regional) order; long-range factors as differentiated from short-range; "the opinion of mankind" in its various manifestations; morality as differently perceived; pressures by interested private groups within the United States; alternative means and methods available, feasible, and preferable; and others.

Two circumstances of interaction are particularly significant: the recognition of new governments, and interactions with Third World countries. It seems to me likely that, in

many respects, relations with Third World countries will become the prototypes of relations with most or all foreign countries.

In 1949, Secretary of State Dean Acheson enunciated a set of principles which expressed America's overall commitment to "Waging Peace in the Americas." That cluster expressed as well as any other the basic principles characterizing US foreign policy:

> • Our essential faith in the worth of the individual;
>
> • the preservation of our way of life without trying to impose it on others;
>
> • the observance by all governments of ethical standards based on justice and respect for freely accepted international obligations;
>
> • protection of the legitimate interests of our people and government, together with respect for the legitimate interests of all other peoples and governments;
>
> • the juridical equality of all the American Republics;
>
> • nonintervention in the internal or external affairs of any American Republic;
>
> • the stimulation of private effort as the most important factor in political, economic, and social purposes;
>
> • freedom of information and the development of free exchanges in all fields;
>
> • the perfection, with the other American countries, of regional and universal arrangements for maintaining international peace; and,
>
> • the promotion of the economic, social, and political welfare of the people of the American Republics. . . .[25]

In reference to the recognition of new governments, America has been, in general, sympathetic towards genuine revolutionary movements that appeared to be acting in their people's interests (but not with ersatz revolutions instigated by subversive movements directed by revolutionaries trained in other countries in their interests). Henry Stimson, while Secretary of State, insisted to the Council of Foreign Relations in 1931 that since the American Revolution, US policy on recognition of new governments had always emphasized the *de facto* element (meaning recognition of a regime's effective control of the country, acquiescence by the people, and willingness to discharge international obligations), with the *de jure* factor held in abeyance.[26] Dean Acheson, on the same 1931 occasion referred to above, explained traditional American policy:

> . . . Our policy with respect to recognizing new governments in the hemisphere is not inconsistent with our encouragement of democracy. We maintain diplomatic relations with other countries primarily because we are all on the same planet and must do business with each other. We do not establish an embassy or legation in a foreign country to show approval of its government. We do so to have a channel through which to conduct essential government relations and to protect legitimate United States interests.
>
> . . . if and when we do recognize a government under these circumstances, our act of recognition need not be taken to imply approval of it or its policies. It is recognition of a set of facts, nothing more. We may have the gravest reservations as to the manner in which it has come into power. We may deplore its attitude toward civil liberties . . . .[27]

Professor John Gange wrote in 1959:

> The United States has often held the fact of free elections to be a critical test of the freely given support of any people to the government . . . . In the immediate postwar months in 1945, the United States government made frequent references to this matter of free elections in its consideration of extending recognition to some of the new governments of Eastern Europe. . . .
>
> As events progressed and the Communists firmly fastened their control over the governments of Eastern Europe (except Finland) the United States reluctantly gave up its insistence on free elections and recognized most of these new governments. The inevitability of

> recognition—because of the need for official intercourse—was thus illustrated again, as it had been many times before in our history and undoubtedly will be again.[28]

Something of the same inevitability emerged to move the United States toward recognition of the USSR in 1933 and recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1971.

There are three nations that regard themselves as motherlands of revolution: the United States, France, and Russia. Each expends much rhetoric on the point, and each has much to support its claim; but no claim exceeds America's in validity. We might profitably cite here a number of characteristic elements of the American style in dealing with, supporting, propping up, opposing, or assisting all foreign countries over generations:

- The American idea—revolutionary, successful, open—has provided a beacon to mankind for 200 years; millions of people have abandoned almost all other lands to participate in the American dream (it is a matter of chagrin that so many young Americans, rejecting history, appear not to know what an unmatched beacon America has represented to much of the rest of the world over time).
- American sympathies have usually focused on the underdog, the downtrodden, the disadvantaged (yet we have also learned via considerable painful experience of the questionable effects of helping people who appear unwilling to help themselves).
- America has consistently pressed for self-determination of peoples everywhere; during and after World War II, the United States, despite the variable resentment and obloquy of some of its friends, pressed for the end of the colonial age and for the freedom of colonialized peoples.
- As noted, America has frequently been among the first to extend recognition to genuine revolutionary regimes.
- Whenever and wherever disasters have struck other peoples, America has rushed to provide practical help in the form of funds, transport, food, supplies, and medical services to afflicted peoples, from Russia to India to Turkey to the Congo (rarely have reciprocal efforts from foreign nations been contributed on behalf of disadvantaged Americans).
- The United States has solidly and consistently supported efforts to articulate universal human rights and to encourage not only words but also deeds in making such rights meaningful.
- The United States has undertaken no measures towards other nations that encouraged or aided in the repression of their peoples—no reparations after wars; no degradation of enemy peoples; no real or symbolic chains. To describe US performance as "imperialistic" requires distortion and falsehood. Rather than damage others, the United States has poured much of its resources into foreign peoples, even into reconstruction of enemy peoples. The Marshall Plan, which Churchill called "the most unsordid act in history," was offered even to Communist nations for their participation (and refused by them); but the unique unselfishness of the Marshall Plan was matched in America's Baruch Plan—the offer, while America enjoyed a monopoly of nuclear power, to yield control of nuclear weapons to an international agency (another offer declined by the Soviets). Nor were such offers solitary; to them can be added others, such as Eisenhower's "Open Skies" proposal, and Nixon's suggestion that all coastal nations waive economic interests derivable from the oceans and ocean beds in favor of underdeveloped nations.

Can any honest and informed evaluator summarize American relations with foreign nations by asserting that the United States traditionally "supports dictatorships anywhere and everywhere"?

In sum, the American style of approach to other nations—large, small, rich, or poor—has carried a heavy content of cooperative spirit, humanitarianism, and magnanimity. It has been characterized by aspects that are the antitheses of encouragement of dictators. No other nation, of any persuasion, has contributed more constructively, more

cooperatively, more effectively, to the economic and political betterment of foreign peoples, or to their progress toward social justice, than the United States. As then-Ambassador Moynihan challenged the critics recently in the United Nations: "Find its equal!"

Unfortunately, America's image as the real inspiration for genuine revolution toward the achievement of social justice has become clouded, tarnished—partly by events beyond its control, partly by its own actions.

When the United States assumed from the French the burden of the war in Indochina, even though for radically different objectives than the French pursued, the United States involuntarily but inevitably took on, in the eyes of many Asians, something of the mantle of a colonialist power trying to prevent the self-determination of Asian peoples. Such perceptions were untrue and unfair, but to many peoples, particularly unsophisticated people, the role seemed fairly clear.

The American crusade behind "counterinsurgency" was similarly misleading. We meant to "counter" *Communist* (i.e., really imperialistic) insurgency, not genuine revolutionary movements; but that qualification never became as clear as the "countering" part. The Communists trumpeted "national *liberation*"; our slogan trumpeted the "*countering*" of insurgencies. It did not take long for both contrived and natural image-shaping forces to cast America in the role of the world's great *counterrevolutionary* power. Again, this perception was false and distorted; but since when has human perception limited itself to reality, to fairness? And we had ourselves contributed to being misunderstood.

Various aspects of other American policies contributed to strengthening (and others to weakening) the misleading image of America as a status quo power. Manfred Halpern offers a thoughtful recommendation:

> In the realm of intervention, as one insightful member of the Department of State has pointed out, these new rules of the game demand far more skill and prudence than the old. For example, for a great power patently to extend support to any local faction, whether in the government or the opposition, may in this highly nationalist environment turn out to be a Kiss of Death. In a world in which the Soviet bloc has become an alternate source of support and supplies, we may not always be able to afford to let a country which refuses to abide by the conditions of our aid suffer the consequences. But the more moral and more useful course of action has also become clearer: it is no longer enough to pick a strongman and intervene on his behalf. The politics of social change demand intervention in behalf of programs relevant to societies already in rapid transformation.[29]

The argument does appear persuasive, in these times of political and social awakening, that the United States cannot let itself be cast, in the eyes of downtrodden peoples, as the means by which an oppressive regime appears able to continue repression.

Sometimes, applicable policies must be delicately spun, with great tact and sensitivity yet with certain kinds of firmness. Professor Edwin O. Reischauer, former American ambassador to Japan, wrote in 1967: "We should not *sponsor* political, social, or economic change in Asian countries, though we should be responsive to requests. . . ." (italics added.) Reischauer points out that there is too much risk when we take the initiative or when our influence is so preponderant that we appear to assume responsibility for a regime or its practices.[30]

Among proliferating and intensifying challenges to America in the future, the following appears to be one of the most critical: how to see that the image of the United States disseminated around the world is reasonably accurate, reasonably consonant with the real ethos of American approach to foreign peoples, preferring equity and cooperation, tilted toward the side of generosity and humanitarianism—not the image of a guilt-ridden "do-gooder," but of a pragmatic power that emphasizes, in a civilized way and among a number of

important objectives, its own self-interests. American interests can be assumed to fare better in relations with other nations that are friendly and cooperative, and if possible, strong.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Flexibility and multiple accommodation, while never losing appreciation for "first things first," seems to me amply illustrated by Abraham Lincoln's sorting out of priorities, even in reference to such an important issue as slavery. Evidently, Lincoln abhorred slavery, but not, at that time, at the expense of preservation of the Union. It was in 1862 that Lincoln wrote to Horace Greeley:

> If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

It is evident from the arguments used by such spokesmen as were cited at the outset of this paper that a school of opinion exists which holds that the United States should enter into joint agreements only with foreign nations which "think like we do." I have no desire to misrepresent or overstate the case; but some critics do wish to restrict America's exchange arrangements to democratic regimes like ours. Others do not insist that the regimes we do business with be democratic—only that they not be repressive. Others emphasize some desired orthodoxy in a single aspect, such as economic, or racial, or religious conditions. Such proponents hold that the overriding criterion as to whether or not the United States should deal with the foreign regime should be the nature of the regime. Some would not even "recognize" certain regimes of which they disapprove.

Among others, Harold Lasswell and Daniel Lerner have cited the need to correct this "pathetic fallacy" that assumes, "in politics as in all creative arts, that the object of one's attention is necessarily also the object of one's affection. In political science, as in all science, the case is usually the reverse . . . ."[31] We shall doubtless continue to find it prudent, in our own interest, in appropriate circumstances, to prop up or otherwise enter into mutually beneficial arrangements, whether or not the regimes in question are dictators or democrats. As former Secretaries Stimson and Acheson made clear, recognition and the making of suitable arrangements do not necessarily convey approval. One recalls the comment of Winston Churchill in the House of Lords, March 7, 1950:

> One has to recognize a lot of things and people in this world of sin and woe that one does not like. The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment but to secure a convenience.[32]

Or even more simply, as William Miller has expressed it, we may or may not like them; but we deal with them "not because we like them, but because they are there."[33]

Two criteria remain paramount: Will the proposed commitment be likely to benefit or to injure American interests? Will the proposed commitment be likely to enhance or to disturb world stability?

However, the immediate contexts in which criteria and principles manifest themselves are steadily changing. None are immune, though paces of change vary from glacial to frantic. Even internationally, the imperatives in favor of the rule of law promise continuing support at some substantial level for the principle of noninterference by one people in the affairs of another.

On the other hand, it will not serve American interests to exhibit abiding zeal in measuring out support to the world's worst regimes. Most indicators point to the probable lowering of impediments to social progress. Perhaps, in a number of instances, one of the interactions most likely to slow down desirable gains will be the injection of moral outrage volleyed and thundered gratuitously by foreigners without responsibility for the subsequent success or failure of their exhortations.

Whatever principles and criteria appear suitable in the future, we will need, as always,

less heat and more light—more careful, informed assessment, not of quirks, whims, biases, or sentimental impressions, but of hard data, as nearly impeccable as we can obtain.

To assert that the United States "props up dictators"—intending by the assertion to place a slur upon the United States as deliberately choosing to be indifferent to injustice or insensitive to oppression or enthusiastic about human misery—is not only false and absurd; it is perverse.

In sum, wherever America supports some dictator, it is never *because* he is a dictator. America also opposes other dictators. America also supports some democrats and in-betweens and rejects others. Whatever our policy turns out to be toward one country or another, the bedrock principle involved is the same in every case: American interest.

NOTES

1. Thomas M. Franck and Edward Weisband, "The New U.S. Style in the U.N., *The New York Times*, 14 November 1975, p. 37.
2. Clayton Fritchey, "Grumbling About Mr. Moynihan," *The Washington Post*, 29 November 1975, p. A15.
3. Ramsey Clark, et al., Letter to *The New York Times*, 16 February 1976, p. 18.
4. Manfred Halpern, *The Morality and Politics of Intervention* (New York: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1963), p. 24.
5. "Book Stirs Furor on Left in France," *The New York Times*, 20 January 1976, p. 6.
6. Craig R. Whitney, "European Socialists Rebuff U.S. on Ties With Reds," *The New York Times*, 5 February 1976, p. 3.
7. *Ibid.*
8. James F. Clarity, "Paris Red Charges Soviet Repression," *The New York Times*, 5 February 1976, p. 1.
9. Flora Lewis, "Western Europe Forging a Multinational Politics," *The New York Times*, 9 February 1976, pp. 1, 18.
10. "Marchais Copies Mao," Editorial, *The New York Times*, 9 February 1976, p. 28.
11. C. L. Sulzberger, "The Path to Easy Failure," *The New York Times*, 26 October 1975, p. E15.
12. *The New York Times*, 18 December 1975, p. 1.
13. "Freedom: Endangered Species?" *U.S. News and World Report*, 19 January 1976, pp. 24-25.
14. Norman Jacobs, et al., "Understanding Foreign Aid," *Headline Series No. 160*, July 1963, p. 19.
15. Barbara Ward, *The Rich Nations and the Poor Nations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974), pp. 134-35.
16. Halpern, p. 8.
17. Accumulating evidence suggests that "do-gooders" often do harm, that complexes of fears and prejudices are often pursued under a cloak of benevolence. See Israel Shenker, "Milk of Kindness Sours, Experts Find," *The New York Times*, 8 March 1976, p. 22.
18. *New York Herald Tribune*, 9 April 1961, cited in Halpern, pp. 23-24.
19. Richard D. Lyons, "Senate Votes Overhaul of Military Aid," *The New York Times*, 19 February 1976, pp. 1, 4.
20. Bernard Weinraub, "Wilson Denounces U.S. Help for I.R.A.," *The New York Times*, 18 December 1975, p. 16.
21. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of The Wealth of Nations* (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1904), I, 16.
22. William P. Bundy, "Dictatorships and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* (October 1975), 51-60.
23. Wolfgang Friedmann, "Intervention, Liberalism, and Power-Politics: The Unfinished Revolution in International Thinking," *Political Science Quarterly* (June 1968), 15.
24. Lincoln P. Bloomfield, *In Search of American Foreign Policy: The Humane Use of Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 152.
25. Department of State Publication 3647, Inter-American Series 38. (This address was given to the Pan American Society of New York, 19 September 1949.) Quoted in John Gange, *American Foreign Relations: Permanent Problems and Changing Policies* (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), pp. 37-38.
26. Cited in Gange, pp. 67-68.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
29. Halpern, p. 56.
30. Edwin O. Reischauer, *Asia, The Pacific, and the United States*. US Congress, 90th Cong., 1st Sess., 1967, p. 8. Cited by Richard M. Love, Lieutenant Colonel, USA, "Are We Doomed to Fail by Backing Status Quo Regimes?" (Student Essay, US Army War College, January 1968).
31. Harold D. Lasswell and Daniel Lerner, *World Revolutionary Elites* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), p. v.
32. Cited in Gange, p. 59.
33. William Lee Miller, "American Ethos and the Alliance System," in *Alliance Policy in the Cold War*, ed. Arnold Wolfers (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1959), p. 36.