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CRITICAL WORLD ISSUES AND U. S. FOREIGN POLICY

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We are entering an autumn season which appears to promise one of the liveliest and most virulent debates on foreign policy in years. Until recently the Kennedy administration has been blessed by a situation as closely approximating a bipartisan foreign policy as anything prevailing during the last decade. Except for not very effective attacks from the extreme right wing, the administration may be said to have enjoyed broad support for its policies in the international field. Even the fiasco of the Bay of Pigs was not exploited by opposition elements to any great extent.

In view of this comparative *union sacrée* in the area of foreign affairs, the situation which now appears to be developing is disturbing. As the electoral campaign progresses, we see prospects of a violent and abusive political debate in which the central focus may be on foreign affairs. As the outcome of the election has become more doubtful controversy has sharpened. The temptation to "go for broke" and exploit every workable angle is constantly increasing. Also, the American public has recently been subjected to a series of shocks and a multiplication of frustrations. The Berlin pot, perpetually simmering, gives every indication of coming to another boil in the near future. The most recent Soviet space feat involving two vehicles has been a real shocker. It shattered a partially restored complacency during which a big question was who was ahead of whom and in what. Certainly it has been another blow to our national poise and self-confidence. Lastly, but by no means least, recent weeks have witnessed a surge of reports about various types of actual or supposed Soviet "build-up" in Cuba. This is the kind of threat, within our own hemisphere and virtually at our front door, which no American needs explained to him. For once, in a situation where we face the Soviets we do so in close conformity with an established national tradition.

During the last months the focus has been centered somewhat more on specific issues than it was previously. In 1961 we witnessed a mad scramble in world affairs with the spotlight shifting crazily back and forth between Laos, Cuba, the Congo, South Vietnam, Algeria, Berlin, the affairs of the U. N., nuclear testing, and disarmament talks. We can, of course, never be sure that tomorrow's headlines will not suddenly highlight an area relegated to the back pages for months. But on

the whole more interest has probably been concentrated on three problems than on all the rest combined. I am thinking of Berlin, Cuba, and the growth and external relationships of the Common Market. These all have certain aspects of life-and-death issues for us and for the West generally. Most disturbing is the thought that the national debate concerning them should develop in an atmosphere of exasperation, irresponsibility, and occasional signs of hysteria.

In particular, pressures continue to mount for "doing something." We are an impatient and action-loving people whose national slogan, if we can be said to have one, is, "Don't just stand there, do something." At times we seem to demand action for action's sake. I am reminded of a *Punch* cartoon of 1956, when the British mood concerning us was on the critical side, showing Uncle Sam running around aimlessly. Britannia, or John Bull, or whoever it was stood on the sidelines admonishing him, "Don't just *do* something, *stand* there." In some situations, such as that prevailing in recent years in the Middle East, this kind of cautious, wait-and-see policy has paid substantial dividends. This does not mean that such a policy should be applied wholesale as a formula for success in international relations. But it does underline that in the absence of clearly obtainable objectives, marking time is better than action for action's sake.

An example of a type of indiscriminating and rather irresponsible demand for action is to be found in the frequent talk about "reverse salami." Willy Brandt's descriptive reference to Soviet tactics of moving one step at a time and never going quite far enough to invite a real showdown is here perverted. First of all, those who demand action strongly imply that under both the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, perhaps under Truman, opportunities for positive action have been lying around neglected. They make a complacent assumption of numerous vulnerabilities in the Soviet world position which we have left unexploited. Rarely do they make specific suggestions about where we should begin the slicing process. Insofar as concrete proposals are made for "taking the initiative," they illustrate how little the concept of "salami slicing" is understood. The term, correctly used, embodies the notion of taking only such steps as involve no serious danger of world conflict. Clearly such drastic proposals as invading or totally blockading Cuba do not properly fit such a definition.

On the other extreme of the scale are demands for "action" that have more resemblance to publicity stunts than to genuine strengthening of Western positions. What we need are not so much maneuvers to win propaganda victories over petty issues like the use of Checkpoint Charley as the consistent demonstration of firmness in established posi-

tions. The Berlin question is one of the best examples of this. Berlin has been at the center of what could be called the Second Cold War as launched by the second Berlin crisis in 1958. This new era of tension sprang from a deliberate Soviet decision. Certainly no compelling initiative on our part set matters in motion. However much free Berlin may be a bone that Khrushchev is determined to get out of his throat, nothing novel in 1958 drove him to action.

The only claim of this nature that has come to my attention is that German rearmament just about then became sufficiently impressive to arouse anxieties in the Kremlin. That the Soviets do not rejoice over the new German army is comprehensible enough. The building of a German military force has been about the only bright spot in the NATO picture for half a decade. The addition of the German contingent to the NATO ground forces has for the first time made conceivable a serious defensive posture in Central Europe. Provided with tactical nuclear weapons, which clearly require a good deal of elbow room, some twenty-five to thirty divisions might actually represent something like a saturation point on a comparatively narrow front. On the other hand, this level of strength would have no significance whatever from an offensive standpoint, for it would quickly become dissipated when fanned out over the vast spaces of Eastern Europe. Germany's contribution, like the NATO forces in general, therefore, has meaning only from a purely defensive standpoint.

If Khrushchev professes that he is "afraid" of a German army, it thus can be only in the sense of that peculiar Kremlin dictionary which contains definitions that seldom agree with accepted Western definitions. His fear would concern the West's ability to put up some kind of defense in the area of "conventional" warfare, an ability which is sure to be reflected in a diplomatic confrontation rendered more favorable to us because our military eggs are no longer exclusively in the nuclear basket.

Khrushchev put his case somewhat differently in a talk with Prime Minister Eden in 1956. At that time he declared that he felt no anxiety about the United States and Britain launching an attack or about Germany doing so by herself. What he feared, he said, was German confidence being sufficiently stimulated by Western backing to lead to military adventures. Germany would, of course, then quickly be smashed into a radio-active waste, but World War III would be underway. The answer to this is that no one recognizes their military limitations more than the Germans and that, if they needed enlightening, Khrushchev saw to that quite thoroughly when he told Socialist leaders Schmid and Erler in 1959 that just two hydrogen bombs would more than take care of Germany.

Returning to Berlin, evidence strongly supports the view that the most persistent Soviet motive in periodically bringing that pot to a boil is to sow confusion and disunity in Western ranks. Assuredly Khrushchev has repeatedly drawn heavy dividends from these tactics. Not only has it proved impossible for the Atlantic powers to ever achieve anything like a completely solid front on this issue, but also each country has had internal dissension and uncertainty. Even in the United States, where recognition of the vital importance of Berlin is fairly general, the results of national and local polls on such questions as whether we should “risk” war for Berlin have fluctuated widely. The endless diplomatic “probing” and the desperate search (notably in the summer and autumn of 1961) for concessions that might be offered to the Soviets are other examples of what President de Gaulle has with some justice characterized as a Western loss of poise. If Khrushchev’s imagination failed him with respect to demands to make on Berlin and other German questions, he would not be stymied by lack of suggestions from American press and broadcasting commentators.

However much they may be more apparent than real, the confusion and occasional contradictions of official American statements has combined with those from private sources to create in Germany a suspicion that American policy is “softening” on the Berlin issue. This is the more regrettable because we really have little or nothing in the way of alternatives here. Certainly this is one of those East-West confrontations where the chances for “reverse salami” are most notable for their absence. We have no perceivable hope even of recovering any of the ground most recently lost, such as by the building of the infamous wall in August of 1961.

Will talking with the Russians about Berlin, then, serve no purpose? Is my perhaps somewhat unenthusiastic reference to “probes” to be interpreted as a slur on all efforts to negotiate? That, most decidedly, is not the meaning I have sought to convey. I do feel that negotiation attended by publicity implying a confidence that positive results are attainable can only confuse our own people and create internal Western tensions, especially between us and West Germany. I am convinced that nothing we could possibly afford to offer Khrushchev could induce him to renounce so good a thing as this apple of discord he keeps tossing into the Western camp.

Yet negotiation can help materially toward gaining the one thing that perhaps is attainable for us—keeping Khrushchev from further risky steps that threaten major conflict or, even better, enabling him to refrain from making them. Having so often set deadlines and spoken in ultimative terms, even this near-dictator has a face-saving problem

to worry him. Once all parties concerned proclaim that a complete impasse is reached, the pressure on him to resume doing things becomes almost irresistible. On the other hand, as we keep on talking, he can very plausibly claim a virtue in holding his dogs in leash while efforts to reach an understanding continue.

The second problem I have stressed is Cuba. Unrelated as the two questions appear to be, Cuba and Berlin promise to tie in rather significantly. (And this seems most probable in a way opposite to that which has been most often conjectured.) Some people in the West, especially in Germany, believe that Cuba, being so obviously a primary "American" concern, will increasingly engage our interests and emotions at the cost of vigor in dealing with issues that are more remote to our national consciousness. Official American statements on Berlin are carefully scrutinized for signs of a "softening" inspired by Cuban worries. Apprehension has actually been voiced that we might yet sacrifice Berlin to Khrushchev in return for his selling out Cuba.

Such calculations are closely associated with European failure to understand fully the reasons for our restraints in dealing with Cuba—a failure I had occasion to note in many quarters when last in Europe in 1960. Instead of appreciating our fear of defeating our own purposes and actually spreading Castroism by premature action in Cuba, the feeling seemed to be that we were terrified by the threats of Khrushchev. Actually, aside from our anxiety about reactions in Latin America, our fear should be that Khrushchev's response to an invasion of Cuba could be the drastic move at Berlin he has thus far hesitated to take. It could then be launched in a climate of world opinion—even among our allies—that could leave us largely isolated. We might well recall here the similar sinister association of Suez and Hungary in 1956.

As is so much the case with Berlin, the Cuban situation is particularly notable for the degree to which it must be played by ear. In the various statements made by the President, the crux of the administration's policy lies in the pledge that we shall neither initiate nor permit aggression in the Western Hemisphere. This amounts to saying that until a more clearly developed aggressive posture is evident in Cuba, we shall hold our fire while keeping our powder very dry. It may also be assumed that the drastic blockade now demanded in irresponsible quarters is subject to the same taboo. What we may do meanwhile in the way of persuading our allies to join in embargo actions, arming or enlisting Cuban refugees, and enlisting the sympathy or support of the Latin Americans probably represents the best course available to us as we watch and wait.

We now come to our third major topic: the current integrative

efforts of the West concerning the Common Market. The Western mountain is again in labor. It is clearly capable this time of giving birth to something very substantial. Among the hazards, on the other hand, is less the prospect of bringing forth a mouse than a Frankenstein monster. This is one of those questions where we are little concerned with Soviet initiatives or interference. The issue involves action almost completely confined within the "family," and we can only blame ourselves if we do not handle it effectively. Most fundamentally we face two problems. The first of these is the mobilization and coordination of the resources of the West, potentially four times those which can be mobilized by the Soviet Union. The second is the development of international institutions to promote Western integration.

Looking at these in reverse order, we face a world development in which catastrophe threatens to become inevitable if nations continue to dispose independently of weapons capable of endangering human existence. The long-range basic validity of the slogan, "One world or none," is difficult to deny. Yet my considered view is that a world half slave and half free and, even more important, in which one side is utterly committed against toleration of political diversity, offers no prospect of progressing toward a stronger world order. Discouraging as the outlook may be, the realistic view is that we will do better than we probably have a right to hope if we can prevent further weakening of the United Nations.

Hopelessness and resignation about a positive development of the present world order does not mean we can do nothing but mark time. Great as are the obstacles and difficulties, no compelling reasons prevent steady progress in gradually fusing the Atlantic community into the kind of system that could at some future date be elevated to a higher and broader plane. Though we cannot develop the point now, a strong argument could also be made for the view that the need for Atlantic unity would be as great or greater if the Soviet threat subsided than it is now. Meanwhile, it would assure us of a colossal dividend in the form of an infinitely more effective coordination of Western resources in relation to all East-West confrontations.

The wastage of Western resources due to lack of coordinated effort has increased in close proportion to the growth of resources capable of being squandered. By far the most scandalous and greatest failure in Western policy has been the inability to arrive at an understanding with respect to the production and control of nuclear weapons and the means for their delivery. It has caused continual wear and tear in Western relations and an incredible duplication of effort and expenditure. Questionable as is the ultimate implementation of France's ex-

travagant program to create by the end of the decade a nuclear striking force scheduled to cost 120 billion dollars, the fact that it could be conceived and bullied through the French parliament is sufficiently eloquent of this situation.

Equally frustrating is the inability of the major Western powers to reach anything like a common position on negotiation for arms control. Relations among the Atlantic allies have deteriorated in these matters to where actual tensions have sprung from the Kennedy administration's efforts to rebuild our "conventional" forces. Instead of the European welcome these measures deserved, they aroused in some quarters a suspicion, difficult to eradicate entirely, that we are contemplating a "nuclear withdrawal."

All of this bears in some measure on the broader problem of Western integration. We can easily decide today whether, in sum, we are moving forward or backward in this vital area. The progress of Common Market relationships has provided a paradoxical combination of glittering opportunities and grim hazards. We cannot dwell on the many angles, the countless wheels within wheels, the complicated role of the various nations, groups of countries, and national leaders. On the negative side have been evidences of a growing "European nationalism" and of an inclination of the core group to cash in self-interestedly on the economic gains thus far assured. Not inconceivable is the possibility that Britain might be left on the doorstep, that the Common Market would play "hard to get" with the United States, and that the vital interests of the Latin Americans, the emerging nations, and the Japanese would be passed over. Such a course of "European isolationism" could throw the Free World into a state of economic civil war.

Conversely, if Britain and the peripheral states of Europe are tied in, and if a true partnership relation is promoted with the United States, Khrushchev's threats of "burying" us by superior production will be demoted to silly bluster. Communism has already been dealt one of the heaviest blows in its history by the manner in which the Common Market has demonstrated the resilience of Western capitalism and its ability to adjust in meeting the problems of a changing society.

At this stage the problem here delineated hardly leaves room for serious alternatives for American policy. We have some choice of tactics and can make our particular contribution to decisions on the nature and scope of the association, the role of the European neutrals (Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland), and the arrangements made with non-European nations. Clearly the President will need the ultimate in

big carrots and big sticks of an economic order to deal effectively with our European friends on these matters. Fortunately Congress now shows every prospect of providing him with the instruments he needs.