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BACKGROUND AND EXTREME ALTERNATIVES IN FOREIGN POLICY

Presented by Wallace E. Ogg

I. UNDERSTANDING AMERICA'S PROBLEMS OF LEADERSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

As America reluctantly accepts leadership in the world our people are confused and frustrated. This confusion and frustration exists because:

- (1) We have not thought through the objectives for our leadership.
- (2) We don't understand the basic problems we face.
- (3) We have a sense of guilt at being a great military power and at participation in the power struggle going on in the world.
- (4) We feel that the alternatives open to us are not good choices and we want to blame someone for having managed badly.

This confusion and frustration can be relieved if we:

- (1) Think through the objectives for our leadership and discover that we are in essential agreement on our objectives. We want security for the United States. We want peace between nations. We want our ideas of human rights to spread and grow in the world. We want to see progress in levels of living throughout the world.
- (2) Understand the underlying problems over the world to attaining these objectives.
- (3) Recognize that military power and participation in the power struggle may be consistent with, and necessary to, the realization of our ideals. Our objectives are consistent with our ideals. They are not the traditional exploitation of other peoples and their resources or the establishment of any kind of empire.
- (4) Recognize that the problems we face are our heritage from history. Our problems could have been modified but not basically changed by a different policy.

For almost 100 years before World War I we did not have to concern ourselves with military power because of our geography, the balance of power in Europe, and the Monroe Doctrine. We did not have to participate in the power struggle.

We were free to lend all our energies and devote all our resources to developing the most productive economy the world has ever known. We developed an attitude of superiority toward international power politics. Because we did not have to participate in the struggle we developed a national attitude that the struggle for power was unnecessary and wrong. We failed to recognize that regardless of whether a nation's objectives are strictly motivated by a lust for power, as Hitler's were, or for developing respect for individual human rights, it takes power to implement the objectives. Actually, to the extent that we have had peace in the last 150 years, we have had it because of the balance of power in

Europe and because of the colonial domination of Asia by the western European powers. We haven't liked either one.

To understand why the attainment of our objectives is very difficult and to understand the nature of these difficulties, there are certain basic historical facts that must be realistically faced.

A. The Balance of Power. From the rise of nation-states in Europe to World War I there were simultaneously a number of great military powers in Europe. All of them were sufficiently strong that no one nation could easily risk aggression alone. In Europe, before World War I, these powers were Russia, Austria, Hungary, Germany, France and England. This provided what historians have called the balance of power. England in the century before World War I considered it her special responsibility to shift her weight to maintain the balance. This balance broke down at the beginning of World War I. It was re-established on a somewhat less stable basis between World War I and II and during this period Japan rose to a position of great military power. Japan in Asia became an important factor in the military balance of power in the world. In spite of our intervention in World War I, we quickly demobilized and we did not consider ourselves a military power. We had fought to make the world safe for democracy. With military victory we naively considered the job was done.

From the standpoint of military power, the world after World War II is a different world. There is no longer a balance of military power among a number of nations. Japan was completely defeated and disarmed. Germany was defeated, disarmed, and partitioned. France was badly beaten in World War II and bled white by the two wars. England, while stronger than the others, is no longer a great military power. Only Russia and the United States remain as great military powers. Only the military power of the United States stands between Russia and her historic ambitions for world empire. We must face the disturbing fact that, from the standpoint of military power, we are all alone. The United Nations holds hope for the future, but for the time being we have little power on our side among our friends.

This is a new situation in the world. It makes peace between nations difficult. And this situation could have existed regardless of communism.

B. The Awakening of Asia. A generation ago, it was common to refer to Asia as the "Sleeping Giant". The world would be different, we said, if the Giant should wake up. The Giant has awakened -- the world is different. The social revolution which has been in progress in Asia for several decades has at least three characteristics. All of them are an outgrowth of contact with the West and especially with the United States. These contacts have been a result of Christian missions, Western business, education in American and European universities, and two world wars.

1. *Extreme Nationalism and Bitter Resentment at Colonial Domination.* From the Near East to Malaya the nations of Asia are determined to rule themselves. The idea of self-government expressed in the American revolution has caught the imagination of leaders all over Asia. All the old colonial powers of Europe are targets for strong resentment. While we have a rather unique history of relations with the nations of Asia in respect to colonialism, the motives of the United States are

held in suspect. They are determined to have racial equality and to rule themselves without domination from without.

Independence for India, Pakistan, and Burma from the English; independence from the Dutch in Indonesia; and independence for the Associated States of Indo-China from France are all evidences of success for Asian nationalism.

2. *Dissatisfaction with Economic and Social Conditions.* As a result of contact with the West, the billion or so people of Asia are no longer willing to starve. People who have been remarkably passive in poverty beyond the comprehension of most Westerners are demanding to see some progress. This is manifested by the demand for land reform.

Most of Asia's people are farmers. With dense population the competition for land is intense. It is not surprising that the demand for social and economic reform should be symbolized by a demand for land reform. The basic problem of too many people and too little productive equipment and land cannot be solved by land reforms alone, but the important thing is that the peasant farmers of Asia believe that land reform is the solution.

In addition to the problem of unbalance between people and the material things people work with, there is a concentration of what little wealth there is in the hands of a tiny minority, who are usually in control of the government. This minority is often socially and economically irresponsible. This situation presents a dilemma for American foreign policy. Land reform is just one aspect of this problem. Our values and our system require respect for both law and order and private property. For the kind of social and economic reform the people of Asia are demanding, considerable redistribution of wealth will be required. To bring about this redistribution a political revolution would also be necessary. No such dilemma faces the Communists. They have no qualms about either economic or political revolution.

3. *The Breakdown of Culture, Tradition, and Religion as a Stabilizing Force.* Examples are the breakdown of the caste system in urban areas of India, the religious vacuum in postwar Japan, and the decline in the hold that family ties and occupation have in China.

While there is evidence all over Asia of a breaking away from traditions and culture as part of the social unrest it does not necessarily follow that the culture, traditions, and religion of the West will take their place. There is a long history of culture in Asia, and the acceptance of Western ideas will certainly be selective.

This situation, also, could have existed regardless of communism. Communism has exploited it. This social awakening, while it is in many ways consistent with our ideals and values, complicates our inherited task of leadership.

C. *Communism versus Democracy.* Just at the point in history where we have reluctantly inherited leadership, communism has matured as a government system built around a political philosophy.

To understand communism it is necessary to think of it as a political philosophy akin to a religion. The issues between democracy and com-

munism are deeper than the conflicting systems of economic organization. The conflicts go even deeper than the conflict between representative government as opposed to dictatorship. Communism fills a psychological vacuum for people who do not have a religion. It is religion with no god but the state. It is ruthless and without love. But it is a faith. It has prophets and a prophecy for the future. It has a future state for society corresponding to heaven.

The prophets are Karl Marx, Lenin, and Stalin. Marx looked at his society at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. He saw exploitation of human beings of that day, and his economic and political philosophy is an interpretation of history. It is an intellectual revolt against Western Christian culture, traditions, and values.

Marx's interpretation of the history of "capitalist" society and his prophecy may be summarized:

1. This society is characterized by a class struggle between workers and owners of property. The owners of property own everything and get all the income. The workers do all the work, produce everything, but own nothing. Owners of property allow the worker only subsistence. The owners of capital are able to accomplish this because of periodic recurring depressions or "crises."

2. This society is, therefore, characterized by recurring crises - we'd call them depressions - that get worse and worse.

3. Finally in desperation, as the crises become bad enough, the workers all over the world will revolt and rise up and seize property.

4. They will set up a dictatorship of the workers. Under this system workers will use property to produce in abundance. There will be enough for all and the basic materialistic urge to struggle for things will be gone. This will, of course, be possible only after world revolution.

5. With abundance the need for government will disappear. The state will "wither away."

6. Then society will have arrived at the communist "heaven." Each will work according to his ability and receive according to his need. (Russia has not arrived yet.)

Marx's interpretation of the communist faith was deterministic. Society had inevitably moved from a slave and master economy to a feudal economy and from the feudal economy to the capitalistic economy. Each state of society bred the seeds for the inevitable development of the next stage.

This prophecy was modified by both Lenin and Stalin for present day Russian communism. Lenin's contribution was that while the world revolution was inevitable it could be promoted. It was his destiny and Russia's to promote it. Thus, Russian imperialism and communism became partners.

Stalin's contribution to the doctrine modified it still further. The revolution had to be consolidated in one nation - Russia - before it could

become a world revolution. World revolution was the final goal but a strong communist state was the necessary stepping stone to that goal.

This combination of doctrine is the core of the faith. People believe in it and are willing to die for it.

By contrast, democracy is a political philosophy which is based on the Christian tradition. These two philosophies are diametrically opposed. They are held by the two great military powers in the world. The issues between them are so sharp they are not likely to be resolved quickly. The struggle is a struggle for the minds of men.

The real challenge of communism is not the danger that the doctrine will attract a substantial number of adherents in the United States. The danger to Western Europe is not even pressing. But the real challenge is from that third of the world's population who are not committed to either side and who are already in social upheaval. These are the peoples in the economically underdeveloped areas. The United States is faced with the dilemma of trying to maintain law and order among these peoples and attempting to support their property rights or of helping to guide the economic and political revolution in these areas.

D. The Technical Revolution. This has become commonplace in our thinking but it, too, complicates the task of leadership. In this half century:

Military weapons have been revolutionized with rapid fire guns, modern artillery, air power and atomic weapons. We now have the technical know-how to destroy civilization.

Communication has been revolutionized by radio.

Transportation has brought all the world close together.

This technical revolution has changed the nature of warfare. It is no longer just a tool of diplomacy. It is the means by which the opposing nation's total civilization may be destroyed. Perhaps all participants may be destroyed.

Also, modern technology and the power relations that exist in the world may, at last, make possible the dream of world conquest by one power.

Another chilling thought about modern technology is that perhaps once a military dictatorship is firmly established, internal revolution is no longer possible. No internal revolution has succeeded against a military dictatorship since 1917. They have only been overthrown by defeat in war.

II. EXTREME ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

The road ahead is a long road. Because all the choices are dangerous and none seem very good, it is easy to feel a sense of frustration.

Some of the alternatives that merit consideration are not politically realistic. They are not likely to become American foreign policy.

They do, however, attract sufficient support to cause confusion. Many of the advocates of the more extreme changes in our foreign policy either are not consistent in their recommendations made at different times or for different parts of the world. For this reason it is difficult to make a general classification.

A. The Militarist Position. There are a number of variations of this alternative. All start from the assumption that war with Russia is inevitable. Most of the people who hold this position believe also that time is on Russia's side, that the longer the war with Russia is postponed the greater will be Russia's strength. Some people who hold this position believe we should start a preventive war at once by dropping atomic bombs on strategic centers in Russia. Others think we should issue an ultimatum to Russia and step up our mobilization to an all-out effort regardless of the cost or the effect on the civilian economy. We are an impetuous people and for that reason this alternative is attractive to many people.

Advocates of this alternative must face the consequences of this policy.

1. Our moral position with the rest of the world built up over a century and a half, is a real source of strength in the world. We would antagonize all our allies by starting a war of aggression.

2. The military outcome of a war of "limited objectives" (no land campaign against Russia) is likely to be a war of attrition. Both the United States and the Russian productive capital would be destroyed with stalemate as the end result.

3. If we won a military victory, the victory would contribute little to the solution of the world's problems. There would be a shift in power relationships. But the problem of poverty would still be with us. The conflict between communism and democracy would not be resolved.

4. The chaos of war would be fertile breeding ground for communism and a threat to democracy.

B. The Pacifist Position. Everyone is in favor of peace. We would all like to be pacifist. But to be a thoroughgoing, consistent pacifist, we must realistically face the consequences of a pacifist policy. The pacifist position is to attempt to resolve our conflicts by arbitration and negotiation and to back up our protestations that we do not expect to be an aggressor by taking the lead in disarmament. The argument is that if we made it clear that we do not intend to become an aggressor, then Russia would not attempt aggression either and would follow our example in disarmament. The argument ignores the role of power in negotiation. It assumes that men, and therefore nations, are basically good and unselfish.

To be realistic in the pacifist position, one must be willing to face the consequences of pacifism.

Suppose instead of disarming, Russia moves in to fill the power vacuum we would create by disarming. Would we acquiesce or would we try at that stage to change our policy? A consistent pacifist must be, and is, willing to suffer the consequences if the policy should have this

result. If pacificism results in oppression, he must be willing to suffer oppression.

C. **Isolationism in Various Forms.** There are many people who believe that America still can and should avoid foreign entanglements. They believe we should in no way concern ourselves with power struggles in Europe or Asia. We should, they feel, avoid any economic dependence on the outside world as well. We should take no responsibility for economic well-being elsewhere. Our military concern should be only to protect their conception of America. It is on this point that isolationists disagree. Some would defend only the United States and Canada; others the whole of the Western Hemisphere; and others would use our sea and air power to anchor our defenses on Japan, Formosa, the Philippines in the Pacific and the United Kingdom in the Atlantic. In any case, however, they would not concern themselves with Europe, Asia or Africa.

Isolationism ignores history. It was the sensible foreign policy for America when the balance of power in Europe and colonial domination in Asia combined with the geography of the Western Hemisphere made the United States secure for domestic development. These historical facts made the Monroe Doctrine feasible. Isolationism does not recognize that the world is different in the middle of the twentieth century.

Like the advocates of pacificism, isolationists must realistically face the possible consequences of this policy and be willing to accept them. If we once burn our bridges behind us it will be difficult to rebuild them.

1. It would likely mean the end of the United Nations as an instrument for international order.

2. It would probably mean that Russia would move into western Europe and the Near East and control the industrial production of western Europe and the oil production of the Near East.

3. We have no assurance that England or Canada would support such a policy. If they did not the United Kingdom could hardly serve as the anchor in the Atlantic. Would we make Canada a dependent state?

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Presented by Robert W. Wilcox

III. AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

In spite of all the confusion and heated debate, America does have a postwar foreign policy. A pattern for postwar foreign policy has emerged. It has often been weak, halting, and confused but there is a pattern which is consistent with the historical pattern.

From Washington's time, American foreign policy has had a short-run immediate objective and a long-run objective. The short-run objective has been to foster and maintain power relationships to protect the national interest. The long-run objective has been the development of