

offensive for elementary decency. In his recent visit to Yugoslavia, Vice-President Mondale was hardly off the plane and had not so much as mentioned the subject when President Tito delivered himself of a little speech in defense of Yugoslavia's record on human rights. It was graphic illustration of Carter's point.

One is struck by Carter's hearty welcome to ideological competition. Putting his own twist on the old liberty vs. equality debate, he declared: "The great democracies are not free because they are strong and prosperous. I believe they are strong and prosperous because they are free." Some friends of Israel fret about the intimations of an imposed settlement in the Middle East, both in the Notre Dame speech and since. Those who support the U.S. commitment to Taiwan may be nervous about Carter's omitting any reference to that small island, except for a mention of "some of the difficulties" that still separate us from the Chinese. Anxiety about the U.S. backing a race war in South Africa may be alleviated by the statement that "in a democratic system the rights of the minority must also be protected."

One could analyze other details touched by the speech, but its importance is in its sense of direction. Not since Woodrow Wilson or Franklin Roosevelt has an American president spoken so positively and believably about "an historical vision of America's role in the world." It used to be that one school emphasized a foreign policy "rooted in our moral values" and another a foreign policy "reinforced by our material wealth and by our military power." It is clear that Jimmy Carter intends to unite what the conventional wisdom held to be antithetical.

At Notre Dame, President Carter concluded: "It is a policy that I hope will make you proud to be an American." Pride is the first of the seven cardinal sins and always a dangerous emotion. It will take some time of seeing the principles in practice before we even share Mr. Carter's confidence. But for the moment his five cardinal principles set out a promise that has made many of us hopeful indeed about what it might mean to be an American.

EXCURSUS II

Elizabeth Spiro on **Conventions, Covenants, and Getting Educated About Human Rights**

After his speech to the U.N. General Assembly earlier this year President Carter's foreign policy stress on human rights was elevated to the position of a "doctrine." However much the president may have thought about the "Carter Doctrine," it is clear that in terms of an overall concept into which specific

actions can be fitted the rest of the administration is running to catch up. The new human rights coordinator in the State Department almost pleaded with a congressional subcommittee for time to draft a human rights policy. Indeed, in a certain sense the president too has catching up to do.

So far the main events in the human rights story have been reactions to events: answering letters, commenting on the lead stories on the wires, and reacting to the process Congress set in motion in the Foreign Aid Act of 1976, which required the publication of the eighty-two reports on the situation of human rights in countries receiving U.S. military assistance. The president's speech to the U.N. did contain, however, one initiative that could have great importance: He said he would sign the two U.N. covenants on human rights and urge their ratification by the Senate and the ratification of the Conventions on Genocide and the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Debates on the ratification of these covenants could have the significance of the debates on the ratification of the League of Nations covenant. It is hard to see how their ratification, or nonratification, could pass by with perfunctory attention, and, despite fears generated by the current debate on the genocide convention, it would be the wisest strategy to make the most, rather than the least, of the occasion: Televising the hearings on the ratifications; call foreign as well as domestic expert witnesses; use the U.S. Congress as a forum for world opinionmaking—there is no reason the U.N. should monopolize this function; educate the American public on the limits of sovereignty, the facts of interdependence, and the relationship of human rights to human needs; and further, put on record learned interpretations of these instruments so they will become part of the body of relevant material determining their application. If these covenants are indeed to become important parts of a "world constitution," it is well to start working on their flaws now.

There are many reasons why such a course would be congenial to the Carter administration. Andrew Young, in a *Newsweek* interview, characterized the human rights stress as "a very sophisticated political tactic that is producing significant change." Speaking of Eastern Europe, he seems to see this change in terms of technological progress, specifically communications: "People can't look at TV without wanting the freedom to enjoy what they see." To extrapolate a bit, the U.S. can contribute to the expansion of human rights simply by keeping the world's eye fixed on the subject, with satellite links an ever more important audience booster. President Carter's constantly reiterated theme of keeping the public informed as policy is developed rather than afterwards is nowhere more appropriate than in the field of the international protection of human rights. At present public knowledge on the subject begins and ends with the spectacular violations of human rights that make the evening news. The program of

human rights laid out in the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights will undoubtedly encounter a great deal of resistance—much of it justified. But there will be no commitment whatsoever to the multilateral approach favored by the administration unless the issues are faced and the American public convinced that the drive for human rights is not a one-way street; that we, too, have much learning to do.

Debate over the substance of these covenants, whether or not approval and ratification will be forthcoming for all four instruments, will help determine the framework in which human rights are discussed for a very long time. But this will only happen if we are better stocked with concepts than we are at present. Apart from discussion of human rights in terms of presidential style, commentary on human rights so far has been framed in terms of the "realist" distinction between a foreign policy of national interest and a moralistic foreign policy. For those who are suspicious of the latter, to say that the Carter doctrine has helped individual victims of oppression says nothing about whether it is also in

the national interest. Those who favor discarding or refining the sharp distinction between national interest and moral purpose must have something to replace it with, relating our permanent interests to the fate of individuals in other countries. It does not take us very far to say that we must speak out on human rights because we are the kind of people we are. The "sophisticated strategy" of which Young speaks may well exist: The feeling that in the long run support for human rights may be a more effective policy for pursuing U.S. interests than support for national self-determination proved to be. It may be that the national interest goal of intensifying areas of common interest between the U.S. and other countries does not exclude but *includes* ways of protecting individual human rights. The theory that demonstrates these propositions, if they exist, needs to be set out on the world stage. At that point the doctrine that is now only declared might begin to direct U.S. foreign policy.

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AROUND WASHINGTON

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS. "This joint Commission is the mortar which binds our two governments together"—Treasury Secretary Blumenthal's words as he opened the third annual meeting of the "United States-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation." Created in 1974 and jointly administered by our Treasury Department and the Saudi Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Commission is becoming an important mechanism for transferring our technology and expertise for their petrodollars. There are, as well, rather subtle political linkages involved.

In addition to Treasury, no fewer than seven other government departments are involved in projects amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars—such things as desalinization, electrification, vocational training, highway planning. Dr. Mansour al-Turki coordinates the commission in his role as deputy minister of finance and national economy. In an interview he estimated that as much as \$5 billion in projects may have already resulted indirectly from the commission's work.

This U.S.-Saudi affair is only one of seven Joint Economic Commissions established during 1974 and 1975. An eighth was contemplated by Kissinger and Nixon with Vietnam (Nixon promised it as a means of transferring aid) but it never materialized. Those that do exist are with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Iran, Tunisia, and India—but only the Saudi endeavor has taken off as yet.

Stephen D. Hayes, an officer in the Treasury office staffing the Saudi commission, notes that the concept of commissions is "an innovative instrument of U.S. foreign policy." Writing in the Winter, 1977, issue of the *Middle East Journal*, Hayes asked the relevant question: "Twenty or 30 years from now will history look back and see the Joint Commissions as harbingers of a new and important approach in U.S. foreign policy or will it only vaguely remember them as some plans which were created in the mid-1970s and then faded away?" Too early to tell. But too important to overlook.

WHITE HOUSE FOOLERY. Cousin Hugh Carter keeps pennypinching away. Many television sets have been lifted from White House offices, and rumor has it that he has cut back on "extraneous" magazines, newspapers, etc. For instance, members of the National Security Council have been deprived of such items as *The Christian Science Monitor* and other journals whose foreign affairs and domestic opinion coverage are no luxury.

Cousin Carter has also made it known that, in the interest of efficiency, the president himself will handle the scheduling for the White House tennis court. Actually, appointments secretary Tim Kraft has taken charge of this vital matter, but it is apparent that everything in the Carter White House goes to the top...though it probably won't work that way for long. Remember when President Carter ordered every Cabinet officer to read and approve personally all directives issued by his or her department?

AND NOW THE ARAB LOBBY. "The Israeli lobby is the most powerful and persuasive foreign