

THE SHAPE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: TWO VIEWS

The inauguration of a new administration raises basic questions about the past shape of American foreign policy and the possible new directions it should seek. Thomas Molnar and Michael Harrington here present two sharply opposed views on these questions. Mr. Molnar is a member of the faculty of Brooklyn College and the author of the recently published *Bernanos: His Political Thought and Prophecy*. Mr. Harrington, a contributor to *Commentary*, *The New Republic* and other publications, is co-editor of The Fund for the Republic's recent study, *Labor in a Free Society*.

THE POWER REALITIES

Thomas Molnar

Our foreign policy will not undergo major changes from the Eisenhower to the Kennedy Administration. I contend that it is handicapped by what might be called the "American dilemma." This dilemma is deeply stamped on the American mind and does not substantially vary whether an Eisenhower or a Kennedy is in command. It is this dilemma which, manifesting itself on several levels, makes our policy hesitant, at once brutal and sentimental, pragmatic and utopian.

This country cannot make up its mind whether it is still the young Republic of 1776, idealistic, revolutionary, and hardly a middling in size and power among the world's nations, or the strongest imperial power of 1961, with vast involvements and precise interests everywhere in the world, and thus conservative, a guardian of a free way of life. The two images are incompatible, especially as seen by others; but inside America, we still cherish the ideal that we have established the best of possible worlds in terms of goodness and power, the home of a permanent revolution that others do not have to fear but rather trust and imitate.

I once heard Justice William O. Douglas, for example, express the fervent but dangerously naive hope that the youth of Asia and Africa might learn their "revolutionary catechism" from the Declaration of Independence, and not from Marx and Lenin. Translated into terms of concrete political strategy, the American "line" is, accordingly, to encourage the ex-colonial and underdeveloped populations to em-

brace a revolutionary course, and, at the same time, to tie them—through alliances, military bases, and economic aid—to the cause of the Pax Americana. This double approach shows no understanding of the fact that since 1917 Soviet Communism has the monopoly on revolution, its ideals and techniques, and that wherever we sow the revolutionary grain, Russia and China are likely to gather the harvest. Thus in encouraging revolutionary movements we create not allies but potential enemies.

But things are even more complex; the schizophrenia of American foreign policy is obvious when we realize that its principal agencies perform contradictory tasks: while the State Department generally adopts the "soft" approach, the Pentagon represents the "hard" one, and the two are fighting it out everywhere from Spain to Japan. And, of course, within the State Department itself various desks pursue often conflicting policies. Cuba is a sad example of this. Another example was recently given by a high-ranking German diplomat: the Shah of Iran had complained to him that American policy-makers consider his monarchic regime a factor of stability in that highly explosive area, yet they occasionally conspire to overthrow it even though the outcome would clearly be satellization by the Soviets.

These and other inconsistencies represent an immense drawback in the conduct of foreign affairs by any administration, even though the Republicans may consider themselves "tough businessmen" and thus closer to a "Realpolitik," and the Democrats think of themselves as more "in tune with the age," and therefore linked to its "progressive" trends. In fact, both manage to confuse and antagonize friend and foe, Right and Left, in a great many countries, whether Generalissimo Franco, the Japanese socialists, South American military juntas, African labor

leaders or **Laotian rebels**. In the resulting perplexity and political vacuum, a centrally directed Communist plan of conquest pushes its outposts and task forces against an ever-receding line on which America claims to make a determined stand but does so only sporadically.

The Eisenhower administration talked big and carried a small stick. Promises of liberation, containment, massive retaliation were loudly made, but nobody took them seriously. The administration's only notable successes were achieved by the Sixth and Seventh Fleets, in the Formosa strait and in Lebanon; both instances showed clearly, as the Iranian policy in 1946, the Berlin airlift in 1948, and the Korean War of 1950, that each time we made a definite stand, the enemy backed down, got out, stopped threatening, came to terms.

Thus I do not think that either the Republicans or the Democrats have any right to blame each other for defeats, withdrawals and inconsistencies, or to claim a clearer view, a better understanding of Communist strategy, a more intelligently conceived offensive plan. The ultimate in absurdity came recently with the investigation into the causes of decline of our prestige abroad. As usual, the problem was put in false, publicity-seeking terms, the blame badly distributed, the real issue blurred. For although the Republicans had been in power for eight years, they were no more guilty than the Democrats—and behind them the entire nation—of near-fatal errors in policy-making, self-righteousness, and the exasperating hesitation between the "let's be tough" pose and the refusal to see the storm clouds behind the silver lining.

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I am, therefore, of the opinion that despite the present great expectations and the care with which Mr. Kennedy pondered over his cabinet appointments, there will be no significant change of policy, and that, cursed by the American dilemma, we will continue to keep everybody guessing—ourselves included.

I have mentioned the receding line of defense of the United States. The focal points of this line are shifting according to Soviet tactics; today it is Laos, Congo, Cuba, tomorrow the Chinese coastal islands, Berlin, Algeria or Brazil. There is nothing unusual, extra-historical, apocalyptic in this game of chess, played ever since the first Neanderthal tribe tried to trap the other, and likely to continue till Judgment Day. But what is entirely and scandalously new is that the world's greatest power runs breathlessly to each break-through, real or simulated,

then hesitates to act or acts so hesitantly that it is difficult to tell whether the intervention did more harm than good.

If anybody doubts this, all he need do is look at the mobile map of the last fifteen years. In spite of the policy of containment, etc., the forces of Communism, having started from the heartland of Asia, have penetrated into Korea, Indochina, Afghanistan, deep into Africa, and hopped over to Cuba and Venezuela. In their advance, they are now assaulting the security of the whole of Southeast Asia, have made mincemeat of the Monroe Doctrine, carried the Cold War into Africa. In the United Nations they surround themselves with an expanding belt of rather obedient "neutralists" (India, Ghana, Egypt, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Guinea, Mali) which may be counted upon to label any Soviet proposal with the sign "compromise solution" and thus carry the day.

For this situation Republicans and Democrats share equal blame, for they and their advisers, whether businessmen or braintrusters, equally misjudge the nature of the enemy and the responsibilities of power.

Since, under the present circumstances, everything else follows from this basic misinterpretation, we must state it explicitly. The men who are likely to have a considerable influence on the thinking of the Kennedy administration, Adlai Stevenson and Chester Bowles, or W. W. Rostow, are convinced that Communism *as an ideology* is on the way out, just as the United States, as a capitalist system, is becoming a near-socialist welfare state. As Mr. Kennedy remarked a few days before his election, we hope to enter upon an era of at least partial cooperation with the new Soviet generation which is more realistic than its revolutionary forebears and will agree to a modus vivendi in certain areas of conflict.

The assumption that Madison Avenue has now a replica within the Kremlin's walls permeates the secret and not-so-secret hopes of our frontier politicians and their professorial advisers. But this indicates that, itself emptied of conviction and moral ideals, our society assumes that other nations also have adopted pragmatic values. But this is not the case: as Father John Courtney Murray observes in his recent book, *We Hold These Truths*, Marxism continues to be the creed of a firm, ideological commitment, indistinguishable from the imperial interests of Soviet Russia and of the entire Soviet bloc.

This brings us to the second gratuitous assumption our leaders make, an assumption which, like

the first, aims at persuading us that the devil is not so black as the "reactionaries" in our midst think. This is the issue of the so-called Russian-Chinese rift, which has become a major point of doctrine in the West, one to which the *New York Times*, *Le Monde* and the Manchester *Guardian* daily pay their homage.

To even an elementary student of Communism, however, it should be clear that if there were real conflicts between the two main Communist powers, the outside world would never learn about them. It is in the nature of totalitarianism to consider the press and other news media full-time participants and instruments in ideological strategy, in this instance aimed at the target of Western credulity. Naturally, between any two powers there are at all times misunderstandings and frictions, even between two such war-and-peace allies as the United States and Great Britain. But is it not obvious that (1) China depends for its industrial build-up on Soviet Russia, and thus recognizes the masters of the Kremlin as both ideological seniors and holders of the purse; that (2) Communism as an ideological commitment and master plan is far too important in the eyes of both Khrushchev and Mao to be submerged under ephemeral differences of view; and that (3) it is the vital interest of both to present a unified front but to confuse outsiders as to the degree of its cohesion.

But suppose there were to develop—not soon, as those might think who constantly confuse the long-range developments of history with here-and-now policy—a serious clash between the two Communist powers. Is it not evident that in view of such a possibility both Russia and China would even now be trying to secure as much initial advantage as possible against the day of conflict? Would they not accelerate rather than slow down their rhythm of conquest, each determined to spread influence, power and fear far beyond their own borders?

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Thus, whether together or separately, Russia and China, and the whole Communist world-movement, present our diplomats and strategists with a challenge of tremendous magnitude. What are we doing to meet it? Are we assuming the responsibilities of power?

Briefly stated, the responsibilities of power mean contributing to the protection of the free world, distinguishing between ally and adversary, exerting our influence so that change and improvement are gradual, not revolutionary.

As far as I can see, the Truman- and Eisenhower-

sponsored dollar diplomacy will be maintained and expanded in the Kennedy period, but the ideological approach will be stepped up, too. Of course, the West, and we Americans, have no ideology to export, except a threadbare "liberalism-cum-democracy"; so we prefer to speak of "psychological warfare." This amounts to a vague "let's sell the American way of life" campaign, a slogan which may have meaning for used-car dealers in Detroit or Denver, but for few others in the world.

The foreseeable Kennedy policy, then, will be to pour billions into the underdeveloped areas and save, if saving is to be done, on the actual military build-up in Europe and elsewhere. In the past, instead of well-conceived and, above all, steady economic aid coordinated with military support, we have given fitful help based on the dogma of industrialization at all costs. Now, the various projects put forward by Mr. Kennedy and his circle are no less haphazard—spectacular stunts, not considered counter-thrusts doggedly pursued according to the imperatives of the Cold War.

In line with this, a recent *New York Times* editorial urges us to dissociate ourselves from the traditional image of the white man, represented by the ex-colonial powers and their past privileges. We are supposed, in the spirit of Justice Douglas's hopes, to bring progress and fraternal feeling to the poor of three continents and even, as Mr. Stevenson suggested recently in *Harper's*, to cooperate with what he bashfully called the "oligarchies" in new nations which are likely to do a better job than "democratic regimes" could now do.

Thus we continue to walk in the wonderland of illusions. But, whether we like it or not, the United States is a white country, and the colored nations which refuse to distinguish us from English, French, Belgians, and Dutch, transfer to us their hostile feelings against the latter. And we are by far the richest nation in the world, whose businessmen, booms and recessions determine the world prices of raw materials, and therefore practically the income of each individual pocket in Asia, Africa and South America. When we parade as the appointed brother of the world's colored proletariat, we therefore create as incongruous an image as that of the fat, camera-laden tourist hand-in-hand with a naked, underfed native.

Being alternately brutal and sentimental, our policy thus refuses to recognize that zone of reality where political maneuvers take place. We are unprepared to fight local wars, to elaborate plans which do not include the "nuclear holocaust" and do include alertness, mobility and initiative.

But since it is evident that the Soviets do not want war, that they are content to conquer the world by encircling the West through a coordinated military-diplomatic-ideological strategy, we ought not merely to prepare for a nuclear showdown which may never take place, but for an indefinitely prolonged Cold War which becomes intermittently warm. This would, first of all, drain the meager resources of Soviet economy and maintain internal discontent. It would keep Communist tacticians guessing—provided we do not limit ourselves to stop-gap measures, but harass them, too. It would give us the only kind of prestige which counts in international affairs because it is the fruit of strength and purposefulness. And we would not have to beg for it as we do now.

Our policies today are too often conceived by utopians who abhor power and seem to be forever apologizing for America's world stature. With Professor Rostow they think that "power will be progressively diffused in the world . . . The image of Eurasian hegemony, fearful and enticing, will lose its reality, and world domination will become an increasingly unrealistic objective" and, with another Kennedy adviser, Professor Wiesner, they suggest that we seek disarmament by all means in order to allay Russian fears.

The fatal error in such views is a philosophical, even a theological one. Men who hold these views misjudge human nature itself, and thus the character of political problems which are, in Hans Morgenthau's words, "projections of human nature into society." As such, our political problems, "cannot be solved, but only restated, manipulated, transformed in each epoch."

THE POLITICAL CHALLENGE

Michael Harrington

During the campaign, John F. Kennedy directed a sharp attack on the foreign policy of the Eisenhower Administration. In listing the particulars of his indictment—that Cuba was leaning toward the Communist camp, that Ghana and Guinea also were moving into the Soviet orbit, that Mr. Eisenhower's proposed visit to Japan was a debacle—the Democratic nominee was specific and forceful.

And yet, in so far as he sketched his own foreign policy views in the campaign, John F. Kennedy did not propose any basic, sweeping changes. In every speech, his major "positive" proposal involved strengthening our armaments position. Once this

point was established as a basic priority, he went on to call for a vigorous approach to disarmament as well. What seemed to be involved here was the restatement of familiar doctrine.

Now the first major foreign policy appointments are in. Mr. Kennedy has chosen Dean Rusk, a distinguished administrator, as his Secretary of State. He has given substantial appointments to Chester Bowles, perhaps the best known supporter of a "liberal" foreign policy, to Mennen Williams, a labor-liberal, and to Adlai Stevenson. But as yet, there is no indication of the over-all policy behind these nominations, of the framework within which these men will operate.

If Mr. Kennedy's campaign remarks are a reliable sign of his positive program, however, fundamentally he will follow the policies of the last two administrations. One must hope that this will not be the case. For Kennedy was persuasive when he spoke of a tragic decline in American prestige. His critique did not imply that the failures of the Eisenhower Administration were simply matters of maladministration. And if his own programs are to be as pointed as his criticisms, they must therefore point a new *direction* for American foreign policy.

I would like here briefly to state my own critique of the underlying problem of American foreign policy under both President Truman and President Eisenhower. Then, on the basis of this critique I will make some positive proposals for change in this time of a new administration.

There is a famous cliché of these times, one which has embellished endless perorations: the Cold War is a struggle for men's minds and hearts. This is hackneyed, trite, and true; it also points to the fundamental failing of American policy in the last decade and a half.

When America began to formulate a policy for the Cold War in the forties, there were two themes which were spoken of as complementary. It was necessary to back military resistance to Communist aggression. This was the philosophy of NATO, of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization, of the Baghdad Pact. But, at the same time, there was to be an economic and political competition with the Russians. This was the rationale of the original statement of the Marshall Plan in June, 1947, and of the first conceptions of Point Four.

In the years since then, American policy has almost completely dropped the political and economic side of its anti-Communism. The Marshall Plan helped in putting Europe back on its feet—and in placing moderate and conservative governments in power. Point Four was long ago swal-

lowed up by a system of granting aid on a strategic, military basis. In the Far East, to cite but a single case, Chiang, Bao Dai and Ngo Diem, Rhee, Pakistan and the Philippines were the main beneficiaries of American aid. None of these nations represented a real political alternative to the appeals of Communism; some of these leaders were so unpopular that they were swept out of power, and others (Diem in particular) will soon follow them.

This fundamentally military opposition to Communism led the United States to alienate the neutralist nations. This was not so much a matter of misunderstanding as it was of carrying out the logic of priorities. If armed strength and fidelity to anti-Communist military alliances are to be the basic criteria of policy, then Chiang is much more valuable than Nehru.

As a result, America must regard the recent developments in the United Nations with a certain horrified fascination. The strength of the neutralists is increasing, the attack upon the conservatives and dictators who belong to the American military pacts is growing, and there is the specter of an anti-American coalition in an institution which once had a safe American majority. Indeed, the recent events in Laos would be an almost comic-opera illustration of this development were they not so tragic in import. There the United States subsidized both antagonistic conservative factions in the army, disdained the neutralist leader who might have provided a solution to the problems of the nation, and prepared the way for Soviet planes.

On the other side, the Communists have grown in power and confidence. They represent a totalitarian force yet a dynamic totalitarianism speaking the rhetoric of democracy, humanism and socialism. They have survived the grim truths of the East German general strike, the Hungarian revolution and the Khrushchev revelations. They have identified themselves with the colonial revolution, thundering their solidarity with the Cubans and the Africans.

This Communist success is not a mystery, though it involves a paradox: that the power bloc which speaks the language of production indices and an industrial forced march has been much more aware of the value of reaching out to men's minds and spirits. We may be amused when Khrushchev storms in the United Nations, or bangs on the table. But when the Asians and Africans hear him speak of colonialism and attack the certified anti-Communist allies of the United States who still participate in that discredited system, the result is far from laughable.

Given this background, I find it disturbing that John Kennedy repeated a variant of the "negotiate from positions of strength" view during his campaign.

In the first place, this view has been made irrelevant by the events. When it was first propounded, the United States had a nuclear monopoly, and an apparent lead in general military technology. Under these conditions, it made some sense (although I did not share the theory, even then) to argue for a build-up which would be so overwhelming that it would force the Russians to an American version of reasonableness. Today such an assumption is an anachronism. Whatever the exact relation of forces in military technology, to speak of America achieving a decisive margin of strength is to overlook the military developments of the past years.

But there is an even more important problem in this position, one which directly involves Mr. Kennedy's approach during the campaign. When the Democratic candidate made armament his first priority, and disarmament his second, there was no reason to suspect him of rhetorical trickery, of playing the politician. That, after all, is precisely the sequence envisioned in the doctrine.

The problem, however, is that these two priorities are at war with one another. If the primary and initial emphasis is to be an arms build-up, that entails a whole series of subordinate priorities. *Therefore*, foreign aid should be channeled to the militarily reliable; *therefore* the main expenditure in nuclear research should be for weapons development, thereby debunking disarmament control systems; *therefore* the strength of the military lobby, so terrifyingly described by Harrison Brown and James Real in *Community of Fear*, is increased.

This, of course, is not a deduction in logic. It is a description of what has been happening for the past decade in American foreign policy. The "positions of strength" become ends in themselves, they are institutionalized and develop political, economic and social power of their own. The "negotiations" part of the formula becomes inoperative, a rationale rather than a policy.

To put the matter concretely: if President Kennedy follows out his statement of making an arms build-up a matter of first priority, Chester Bowles will still be able to make speeches, to win some gains for his ideas in the interstices, but he will have no chance of carrying out the kind of policies which he has so cogently advocated.

But then, where does this line of analysis lead in terms of positive proposals? Even if pacifism or unilateralism were theoretically desirable, they hardly represent political options in the United States today, for Kennedy or for any major political leader. What one can hope, however, is that the Kennedy Administration will make limited changes, but make them in the line of a new direction in foreign policy.

The framework for a new direction can be simply stated in terms of American values: a worldwide commitment to democracy in a practical and realistic sense. Negatively, this would involve a break with the support of the colonialist remnants of the military pact powers, above all of France in Algeria. Positively, it would be expressed in terms of a determination to make the political independence of the ex-colonial nations substantive by providing them with the economic assistance to industrialize. ("America," Julius Nyerere, one of the best of the new African leaders, has said, "missed the process of African independence. Will it now miss the process of African nationhood?")

Nothing in the last paragraph is particularly startling. Indeed, it comprises a summary of the liberal rhetoric of the past decade. The point of departure is not the newness of the thought; it is the determination to make it the effective principle of actual American policy. And this, in turn, requires a changing of priorities. It is not pacifism, it is not unilateralism, it is simply the idea that the political, economic and social struggle against Communism (or better, for freedom) comes first, armaments second.

If President John F. Kennedy could, in his first term of office, do nothing more than reverse the priorities and restore political dynamism to American policy, he would have made a major achievement. In terms of specifics, this shift in priorities could be summarized in three main terms: controlled disarmament, disengagement, economic aid and self-determination.

American disarmament policy has long been tangled in the impossible logic of the armaments-first priority. The scientists who are most opposed to control systems are those who have been working on the problem. The amount of money spent in disproving the potential of effective control has far outbalanced the amount spent in developing control systems. (America, a perceptive observer has said, wants total controls and no disarmament; Russia wants total disarmament and no controls.) In the past decade, disarmament has been a department of the military Establishment; in the next, the military chieftains and their scientists and corporate lobbies

must be made subordinate to, a department of, disarmament.

In talking of disengagement, one cannot be quite so positive. Three or four years ago, there was reason for hope in this regard. Khrushchev was beset by internal difficulties, the Poles proposed a nuclear-free zone in central Europe, there was support for the idea among Social Democratic and even Conservative parties throughout Europe. Now, Khrushchev has less motive for such an approach (and must deal with the Chinese Communists), and there is more than a little disillusionment among those who were once partisans of this concept.

Yet disengagement is emphatically still worth a try. For once, the United States might even take the political offensive in seeking just that. But here again, the old order of priorities must be reversed. For a decade at least, America's policy in Europe has been dominated by the NATO concept and, above all, by the determination to include a rearmed Germany in the Western alliance system. The results have hardly been impressive. The German rearmament obsession has not won political friends among Europeans with a decent memory. NATO itself has been split by factionalism and rationalized by vague, lofty talk about European community. At times, it seems that the major operative consequence of the whole policy has been to make sure that the French were supplied with American weapons for the suppression of Algerian independence.

If disengagement were to become a basic point in American policy it would mean the abandonment of the assumption that the threat of Russian invasion is an imminent reality in Europe and that land forces are required to meet it. It would also mean that the Strategic Air Command approach, under which so much of political substance has been given up in return for bases, would be scrapped. If the United States does not adopt this last change soon, military technology will rapidly make the whole policy obsolete anyway.

Finally on this point, one last word about a familiar objection. Dean Acheson and others have argued that the Russians cannot possibly accept disengagement, so why try? Even if the assumption is granted (and I would not grant it), the Acheson conclusion hardly follows. It would be, for once, an interesting spectacle to see the United States take the initiative in a bold policy for peace, and to watch the Russians as they try to defend *their* realities. More seriously, if anything positive can be done for the Hungarians, the Poles and the other Eastern Europeans suffering under the presence of the Red Army, it will come from this kind of action.

And then there is the question of economic aid and self-determination. Like virtue, practically everybody in the United States is in favor of both; like virtue, everybody more or less ignores both when it comes to action. This, as I have pointed out, is not the result of stupidity, malevolence or bad administration. If NATO is the keystone of American policy in Europe, and if France is essential to NATO, then obviously one must vote with France on the Algerian question in the UN, or else make a shamefaced abstention.

Such a change in American policy will not be easily achieved. But if it does not come about, then disaster can only follow upon disaster. To give Nikita Khrushchev the anti-colonial franchise in the contemporary world (a license he will use to build up his own colonialism) is a political tragedy of the first magnitude. Yet that is precisely the predictable consequence of continuing our present approach, of further indulging our pacto-mania.

Similarly with foreign aid, the achievement of a practical program is much more difficult than the pious, rhetorical commitment to aid in industrialization. Chiang has been given enormous sums; Formosa has been an economic success. But who can count up the political cost of this approach, this identification with one of the most discredited dictators of our time? For that matter, who can guarantee the future of Formosa after Chiang's death?

Here again, the development of a positive and effective policy depends upon a reversal of the basic priorities. Strategically, one must suppose, Chiang

is a first-class risk. He has an unsinkable aircraft carrier, and does not allow Communist, or neutralist, or other, opposition. Supporting Chiang is an inexorable conclusion of our past policy.

On the other hand, the value of a shift in policy is so obvious that it hardly needs argument. American support of Chiang is highly useful to Mao and the Chinese Communists. But American support to the building of industrialized democracies in nations like India, nations which are given the freedom to be neutralists so long as they use the aid in the interest of their people, this would be a subversion of Mao. The news of a democratic India moving toward Nehru's socialistic pattern of society humanely and non-violently would penetrate all the political curtains in the world, the bamboo as well as the iron.

In short, I see the Kennedy Administration as faced with a rather basic option. It can follow out the policy of Truman and Eisenhower (and the drift of Kennedy's campaign statements) and seek its own variant on the negotiate-from-positions-of-strength doctrine. If it does, the disastrous political decline in American leadership will continue even if the State Department were to be staffed by a community of Saints. On the other hand, there are resources in America—political resources, the resources of democratic tradition, and even those of some of John Kennedy's speeches—which would make it possible to begin a momentous change. Not pacifism, not unilateralism, for these are not real options; but a real subordination of the military to the political, a new departure for American foreign policy.

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