

Round Robin on U. S. Foreign Policy

American Foreign Policy—Freedoms and Restraints. Fall, 1962 issue of *Daedalus*. \$1.50.

by E. Raymond Platig

"How free is the United States to conceive and execute a foreign policy significantly different from the one it presently pursues?" That is the important and fascinating question posed in the editor's preface to this issue of *Daedalus*; it is not one to which the issue provides a systematic answer.

The reader will find here two articles (those by Stanley Hoffmann and Roger Smith—the latter "a pseudonym for an individual who has had long experience in government service") which seek to classify and discuss the "restraints" on American foreign policy. In addition there are seven articles dealing with various aspects and characteristics of American foreign policy. Though often only implicitly, most of the articles do suggest—in line with what the editor calls the "larger purpose" of the issue—"ways in which the United States may profitably move." Presumably those factors which permit profitable movement are the "freedoms" of the sub-title, but nowhere are these specifically identified and classified.

Thus the reader who looks to this issue hoping to find a well-articulated contribution to the development of international political and foreign policy concepts and theory will be disappointed. The more so since the schemes and propositions proposed by Hoffmann and Smith neither draw upon nor contribute to the analyses of the other authors.

(Hoffmann's is the only article in which there are sure indica-

tions of the author's familiarity with some of the other articles. He makes brief mention of the articles by May and Aron and, in his treatment of some subjects, gives evidence of having read that by Smith. Hoffmann's piece is clearly the one most central to the title of the issue; it is two and one-half times as long as the other articles. Thus, one could wish that Hoffmann had been named the editor for the symposium, had set and enforced standards of relevance for the authors and, in the process, had tested, adjusted and refined his own generalizations. It can be objected that the pressures of journal publication—to say nothing of academic pressures to publish—make such an approach unrealistic. But it can equally well be argued that both knowledge and policy would be better served by resisting rather than submitting to those pressures.)

Some readers may feel that the classification efforts of both Hoffmann and Smith succeed less in building a solid basis for general analysis than they do in providing springboards for some of the author's own policy observations and recommendations. Neither Hoffmann, in discussing the restraints associated with the international political system and those associated with the domestic polity, nor Smith, in discussing those restraints which are structural and those which are "non-structural and possibly temporary," uncover factors which are new to those who have read such authors as Charles B. Marshall, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans J. Morgenthau and Dean Acheson.

Nevertheless, those interested in exploring fully the literature on restraints and limitations may find here some rewarding perspectives. There is, for example, Smith's all too brief discussion of the gap between the "upper reaches of the State Department," subject to

"unrelenting pressures" (not least from the White House), and the lower reaches skilled "in grinding out stock position papers and reiterating policies that sing the old tune." Smith suggests that one result of this gap is that United States foreign policy is likely to flow from "summary decisions based on . . . reflex reaction that draws on the frame of reference the executive brought to the job from a previous incarnation." In this particular, Smith seems to add weight to the thesis of Ernest R. May concerning the need to differentiate "calculated policy" from "axiomatic policy."

May's thesis depends heavily upon the nature of United States policy in two cases: the Korean War and the Suez Crisis of 1956. But in neither case is the thesis reliably supported since in delineating the calculated policies May presents historical reconstructions which "are largely hypothetical." Moreover, one wonders how useful the distinction between calculated and axiomatic policies is when, in the Korean case, May acknowledges that Secretary Acheson in his famed Press Club speech of January 1950, "had not ignored the axiomatic policy when announcing the calculated one." On the basis of the evidence presented by May, there seems little reason to believe that what he calls the axiomatic policy was any less the product of careful thought than was the calculated policy, yet it is on this distinction that his thesis turns.

The contribution of this issue lies not in the field of theory but rather in some ideas it presents concerning an appropriate policy posture for the United States and ways in which it "may profitably move." It is worth keeping in mind that these articles were prepared before either the French veto of Great Britain's bid to enter the Common Market or the

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Cuban crisis of October, 1962.

With some exceptions the authors share the view that American foreign policy would benefit from a stance more relaxed, more moderate and more confident; this is not a handbook for the forward strategist.

Stanley Hoffmann suggests that time, more than any direct action by the United States in the East-West conflict, is required to erode the dangerous bi-polarity and ideological nature of the cold war. The greatest area for American maneuver, he argues, is in the non-Communist world, and here he urges a "minimalist policy," one that is slow to intervene and reluctant to seek control of events. This policy can "be summed up as trusting pluralism in order to get a pluralistic world." One might want to question the rigidity with which Hoffmann says that "the idea of any further military alliance" in the gray areas "ought to be abandoned." And one might ask for more meaningful guidelines than that the United States limit itself to "the kind of aid that, given the special circumstances of each country, is most likely to produce good results." But, on the whole, the reasons Hoffmann advances for preferring a minimalist policy are worth noting, especially as they bear upon nuclear deterrents and NATO.

In much of what he has to say Hoffmann is close to Raymond Aron, who offers his "Reflections on American Diplomacy" from a European vantage point. Aron feels that "moderate opinion in Europe" would approve of the "eclecticism or flexibility" which he feels characterizes most of the Kennedy Administration's foreign policy. But he has little praise for the President's academic advisors, "especially in regard to arms, disarmament or arms control." However, he believes they are finally learning to traverse "the distance between Cambridge and the White House." In the field of arms, and more particularly in regard to the *n*th country problem,

Mr. Aron would like American leaders to "make the inevitable concessions to others' [read "General de Gaulle's"] motives even if these appear irrational in their own eyes."

Perhaps it says more of Mr. Aron's European origins than it does of the appropriateness of the American posture to note that, both in "serious matters like armament and disarmament" and "even in matters of secondary importance," he urges the United States not "to show too much concern with the judgments of the uncommitted nations." One can sympathize with the difficulties of the American foreign policy maker faced with the inability of the Afro-Asian to understand why the United States should find French irrationalities more compelling than his own.

There are, of course, guidelines for those who would make their way through such difficulties and Lincoln Bloomfield demonstrates the utility of one of them when he assesses the role of the United Nations in United States foreign policy in terms of "vital American interests." He calculates that in the United Nations the uncommitted states do not always lean toward the Soviets in their neutrality, nor are they entirely irresponsible. He calls attention to the existence of divergent as well as common interests both in the world at large and within alliances and suggests ways in which the United States can find the United Nations helpful in coping with this multiplicity of interests. His own prescription for moderation takes the form of a call for "a United States which is itself strong, which works simultaneously towards unity in the Atlantic basin, [and] which maintains a continuous dialogue with its adversaries on honorable terms while time does its work."

In addressing himself to "Defense Policy and the Possibility of Total War," Bernard Brodie

sounds a note of moderation in a field where those who refuse to think about the unthinkable seldom hesitate to speak about the unspeakable. In view of the positions taken by Hoffmann and Aron, it would have been helpful had Brodie addressed himself to the question of the number and control of nuclear deterrents in the Atlantic Community. But his theme is broader and in some ways less complex. He is anxious to "reduce the chances that *sane* men could resort to total war." This can be accomplished by doing such things as "building fallout shelters" and "increasing the protection of our retaliatory forces." Only then will we have reliably shifted the "burden for supporting policy to limited-war forces." Thus, "we probably have to spend more on total war in order to have sound reasons for spending more on limited war."

There are more paradoxes in the article by Peter Paul Stender than the one referred to in the title: "The Paradox of Soviet Power." Mr. Stender is concerned to elucidate "the paradox of a great power founded on a weak society." It is useful to have him remind us that the Soviet Union is far from being a mature industrial society, that it is "still struggling with a quantitative and qualitative problem of backwardness."

But still one wonders if Mr. Stender isn't too ready to assume the universal applicability of Western standards of quality. And one wonders if it doesn't require both imaginative logic and selective history to argue that the "social underpinnings" of Soviet power so weaken it and "inhibit" its use "that Soviet foreign policy is marked by an essential conservatism, indeed defensiveness." One doesn't have to participate in the "American panic about the omnipresent 'hand of Moscow'" in order to question Mr. Stender's statement that "the Soviet Union is obliged to define its foreign policy primarily to meet problems

posed for it by the more advanced West."

If one were to apply Mr. Stender's theory of power to Communist China one would be likely to conclude that the Peoples Republic is pursuing a policy of self-abnegation. This is not the view of Herbert Feis in a thoughtful and sensitive essay on "The United States and China." Mr. Feis recognizes and dissects the high emotions that have characterized Chinese-American relations. He acknowledges the possible impact upon his own views of an "irrepressible hurt pride and indignation at the abuse which the Chinese Communist government has spewed over our country and its institutions and ideals." But he argues neither that the mainland must be liberated nor that large doses of American good will are needed to mollify the Chinese Communists. He weighs the pros and cons of recognition and comes down on the side of withholding it until such time as it can be part of a general *modus vivendi*. In his concluding paragraph, Mr. Feis expresses the attitude of confident moderation which characterizes so many of these articles:

"We must maintain a military force so formidable that our diplomacy need not yield to fear or threats. Yet we must be sure that our diplomacy does not reject any fair chance to settle our quarrels with Communist China or the Soviet Union on terms that provide both ourselves and them freedom from fear, because our military

superiority makes it seem less essential to do so."

These are some of the signs in this issue of *Daedalus* that indicate a mellowing of American thought on foreign policy matters. Clearly these authors are not moored to what Smith calls the "subvision of total victory." These are signs of an acceptance of the realities of power (even nuclear power) and the centrality of interests, of the value of time, patience, equanimity and firmness, of the complexities of issues and the limits of rational planning. These are signs of an understanding that somewhere between omnipotence and impotence the United States possesses impressive power with which it can confidently meet though not master the future.

But there are a few exceptions, and they draw their inspiration from Wilson, not Goldwater. The most notable is found in John N. Plank's article on "The Alliance for Progress." Mr. Plank, who since this article was written has traversed the physical distance from Cambridge to Washington, sees the Alliance as in "the high Wilson tradition"—as an expression of the thought that the Western hemisphere can be "radically transformed through the rational and orderly efforts of men of good will." Mr. Plank, who finds the Alliance "superb in conception," appears to believe, along with the administration in Washington, "that it knows what is necessary to bring the countries of Latin America effectively and

democratically forward." He understands that the Latin Americans are reluctant to "take direction or even guidance from the United States" and concludes what is needed, therefore, "is profound change in attitudes, a profound shifting of wills, in both the United States and Latin America." If where there's a will there's a way, then we need only the way to the will.

It is probably in connection with the task of nation building and social renovation that American foreign policy thinking remains most bullish. It is to be regretted that the issue under review does not contain a searching examination of freedoms and restraints associated with United States aid programs.

The United Nations is another area in which American thought is often impatient for progress. This is demonstrated even by such a seasoned observer as Lincoln Bloomfield who seems to over-estimate the degree to which a clear prohibition against using force for political ends is or readily can become one of the "established norms of acceptable international conduct." One wonders, too, if his desire to have a more reliable "para-military capability" for the United Nations doesn't reflect too much a great power interest in maintaining order in the gray areas. There is little evidence to suggest that the small and medium powers in these areas are any more anxious to be subject to an international force than are the great powers.

There is a lot this issue of *Daedalus* does not cover; there is a lot it does cover that could be and has been better covered; there are many points open to debate. Nevertheless, one feels that American foreign policy would be well served if the "attentive public" achieved the level of sophistication here represented. One can hope that the wings of *Daedalus* are as adequate for the flight from Cambridge to Main Street as they once were for a shorter journey.

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