

A New Pattern for America

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Three historic patterns can be discerned in the relations America has established with the outside world. America has offered itself as a model to the world, it has entered the world as a missionary, and it has confronted the world as a crusader. In recent years a fourth pattern has been added: America bestrides the world as an imperial power with global responsibilities. In the Spring of 1965, when I endeavored to define this new pattern of American foreign policy under the heading of "globalism," a national newspaper refused to print my article with the explanation that there was no such thing. In the meantime the ideologues of the Johnson Administration, such as Professors Brzezinski and Rostow, have confirmed my view. They have proclaimed "the American decade," "a decade of opportunity and responsibility for the United States."

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From the very beginning of American history, there has existed an organic relationship between the character of American society and its relations to other nations. It was as an example for other nations to emulate that it offered itself to the world. The very creation of the United States was regarded both by its founders and by foreign observers as an experiment which had a meaning not only for the United States but for all the world. America, wrote Thomas Paine, "made a stand not for herself only, but for the world, and looked beyond the advantages which herself could receive. Even the Hessian, though hired to fight against her, may live to bless his defeat; and England, condemning the viciousness of its government, rejoice in its miscarriage."

The promise of universal happiness, implicit in the American experiment, obviously did not mean that all men could achieve it by simple imitation, but it did mean that no group of men was *a priori* excluded from achieving it and that, as a matter of principle,

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given favorable circumstances, all men could achieve it. From this conception of the American experiment's relation to the world at large it was only a step to the acceptance, on the part of America, of the positive obligation to assist less favored peoples, subject to American influence, to achieve the happiness enjoyed by Americans.

Thus the territorial expansion of America, hesitating and embarrassed, beyond the boundaries of the continent at the turn of the century goes hand in hand with the self-confident and vigorous expansion of the American principles and practices of government. In that fashion, territorial expansion could be justified as serving the American mission, and so too could its liquidation after that mission had been achieved.

The hyperbolic moralisms with which American expansion has been traditionally justified, contain, then, elements not only of subjective sincerity but also of objective truth. The idea of the American mission to the less fortunate peoples of the world is certainly a political ideology, a rationalization and justification of policies that were undertaken for other and primarily selfish reasons. But that idea expresses also a serious commitment to a mission that is merely the American mission projected beyond the territorial limits of America and circumscribed only by the reach of American influence.

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The missionary conception of the relationship between our domestic situation and our foreign policy here blends into the third, the crusading one. As missionaries of the American experiment, we would offer our assistance to others who were free to accept or reject it. As crusaders, we would impose it on the rest of the world, with fire and sword if that were necessary.

The actual limits of such a crusade would be the limits of American power, its potential limits would be the limits of the globe. The American example is transformed into a formula of universal salvation by which right-thinking nations would voluntarily abide and to which the others must be compelled to submit. A classic example of this new relationship between the American domestic purpose and its foreign policy is Woodrow Wilson's crusade for universal democracy.

Towards the close of the second world war and in its immediate aftermath, the United States took upon itself the task of the reconstruction of the world by reviving the Wilsonian conception. Emerging from the war as the most powerful nation on earth, without whose global involvement the world could not be reconstructed nor the American national interest safe-

guarded, the United States now faced the Wilsonian problem without the benefit of the earlier isolationist escape.

With only two power centers left in the world, of which the other happened to be the Soviet Union, the choice of 1920 was no longer open to the United States; that choice would now have meant anarchy in Europe and Asia to be followed by the establishment of order under the auspices of communism.

That new and unexpected threat presented America with a crisis for whose solution the historic patterns of its relations with the world had not prepared it. That crisis proceeded in three distinct stages. The first stage was a period of adaptation, of restoration, of creation, culminating in the "fifteen weeks" of 1947 during which a whole new system of American foreign policy was devised, derived from a radically new conception of the American purpose abroad. That first stage came to an end at the conclusion of the armistice in the Korean war of 1953. The second stage differed sharply from the first one. Rather than being a crisis of restoration and of achievement, as was the first stage of the postwar crisis, it was a crisis of perplexity, of seeming inability to continue the process of adaptation, restoration, and creation so auspiciously begun. The novel problems of the postwar world were at first successfully met with one great creative effort, and now the nation settled down to meet the novel problems of the day with the remedies of yesterday, many of which had outlived their usefulness, and transformed yesterday's creative effort into today's routines.



This period came apparently to an end in 1961 when the Kennedy Administration embarked upon an intellectual effort at laying the groundwork for a new American foreign policy appropriate to new political conditions. But while these efforts were translated into eloquent political rhetoric, they hardly influenced

the actual conduct of American foreign policy. After this brief and inconsequential interlude, the routines of the 1950's were continued with renewed vigor. They are now put at the service of a revived globalistic conception of America's role in the world. That conception is Wilsonian in content, but it is underpinned by a new conception of American power. It is this marriage between Wilsonian globalism and the belief in the paramountcy of American power that characterizes the new period of American foreign policy.

The new doctrine assumes that "the United States is today the only effective global military power in the world." This military paramountcy is likely to disappear when the Soviet Union will have acquired global military capabilities similar to ours. "What should be the role of the United States in this period? To use our power responsibly and constructively so that when the American paramountcy ends, the world will have been launched on a constructive pattern of development towards international stability." "International stability" is indeed the key word of the new doctrine.

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However, stability is obviously a neutral term. There is no more stable system of government than an autocratic or totalitarian one. Vietnam would be much more stable than it is today in consequence of our intervention on behalf of stability, if the Communists were to govern all of it. Obviously we are not called upon to establish and support any kind of stability throughout the world, but only stability that favors our interests. If it were otherwise, we could afford to sit back and let an unstable world find its own stability, Communist or otherwise. What we are against is not instability per se, but instability of which communism and through it the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba might take advantage. Thus the doctrine of stabilization reveals itself as an ideology of the status quo, one opposed to social and national revolution because of their Communist auspices or components.

As Alexander I and Metternich invoked Christianity against the liberal revolutions, so the new doctrine invokes the abstraction of stability against contemporary revolutionary change. By doing this, the new doctrine evades the real issue facing American foreign policy. That issue is not to create or maintain a shaky stability on the foundation of American military power and on the ruins of national and social revolutions, but to support selectively these revolutions and thus build a new stability from the revolutionary ferment of the age.