

the Czechoslovak tragedy. But perhaps it will serve one purpose here at home. Perhaps it will demonstrate to naive Americans who believe that international dealings can be conducted by slogan and a philosophy book that we live in an amoral universe.

It is a paradox, but an unavoidable one, that the atomic weapons have kept the peace between the superpowers, while permitting lesser grievances to be fought in their shadow. It also may be true that Europe today is no longer the cockpit of the world but a rather tiresome sideshow whose inconvenience the superpowers are willing to tolerate so long as

they do not get out of hand. Neither Washington nor Moscow has any intention of attacking the other, and each is willing to let his rival reign within his sphere of influence, despite the fact that both are reluctant to admit it officially. This pattern of self-restraint dates back to the worst days of the cold war.

Czech freedom has been crushed and perhaps all we can do is mourn. But we should also learn, if we did not already know the lesson.

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"HOW NEW WILL THE BETTER WORLD BE?"

Ernest W. Lefever

Back in 1943 when all good people, or most of them, were promoting their favorite blueprint for the post-war world, Carl L. Becker wrote an essay, "How New Will the Better World Be?" for the *Yale Review*, and later expanded it into a book with the same title. His thesis was simple and convincing: The "better world" will have to be made out of essentially the same raw materials as the present one — sovereign states, power politics and, of course, the chief ingredient, man, who has demonstrated a stubborn resistance to drastic reconstruction.

Becker's timely essay, which ran counter to the spate of writing announcing the end of power politics through international law or world organization, reflected the wisdom of his earlier classic, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, published the year Franklin Roosevelt won his first term as President. Professor Becker, like E. H. Carr and Reinhold Niebuhr, has been a critic of apocalyptic utopianism which demands new legal structures, a new politics, or new men to "solve" the problems of war and injustice.

One would have thought that some of the more painful and inhumane postwar realities — the Soviet conquest of Eastern Europe, Mao's conquest of China,

and the exploitation of tribal-national sentiments by assorted revolutionaries — would have put an end to utopian, romantic, and apocalyptic assumptions in political discourse, at least from literate men. But Stalin, Mao, Ho, and Castro, even with a gentle assist from Niebuhr and an upsurge of interest in Edmund Burke, Tocqueville, and the Federalist Papers, were not enough to stop the foolish romantics, soft and hard, from promoting world government and other grand schemes.

The universal system-builders seem to have quieted down in the past decade, but there has arisen a new breed of romantics who in anger and frustration have struck out wildly against the exercise of United States power. These revolutionary romantics, goaded on by American involvement in Vietnam, are a mixture of the New Left, old Left, utopianism, and nihilism. The ideological undercurrents in this diverse movement have found their way into the work of the more respectable writers who offer prescriptions on how Washington should limit, share, internationalize, multilateralize, restrain, or otherwise mute its considerable power.

The books of two scholarly Senators come to mind. Mr. Fulbright's *Arrogance of Power* properly warns against self-righteousness and Mr. McCarthy's *Limits of Power* against the "illusion of omnipotence," to use Denis Brogan's phrase. But neither seems to understand fully the limits and obligations of a superpower or the persistence of tradition, particularly in the Third World. Both exhibit a strange ambivalence toward U.S. responsibility, a kind of neo-isolationist-

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interventionism. Reluctant to accept military burdens in the interest of keeping the peace, they appear eager to induce political reform in other states. Both men oppose U.S. military assistance because it allegedly upholds "reactionary regimes," but they are prepared to support non-military aid if the recipient governments do our bidding. A year ago Senator Fulbright said we should expel Premier Ky's government if they "won't do what we tell them to do." When Ky called him a "colonialist" Ky had a point.

McCarthy's critique of recent U.S. foreign policy makes many unsupported generalizations, but it is not as strident as Fulbright's, and is relatively coherent compared to his vague and romantic campaign for a "new politics," which has turned out to be an escape from political responsibility for him and many of his disciples. (Incidentally, neither McCarthy nor Fulbright seems to understand the necessary limits of Congressional responsibility in the formulation or execution of U.S. foreign policy.)

George W. Ball's consequential book, *The Discipline of Power* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 363 pp. \$7.50) is a tower of reason, realism, and responsibility in contrast to the whining superficiality of Fulbright and McCarthy. Ball also stands in contrast to the half-dozen "kiss and tell memoirs" by men like Roger Hilsman and Arthur Schlesinger who have recently left government service. As Meg Greenfield points out, this genre of memoirs includes thoughtful history, irresponsible disclosures, and self-serving and less-than-factual revelations in various combinations (*The Reporter*, November 30, 1967).

Not angry at any President or Secretary of State, or at the Establishment itself, Ball has no compulsion to reveal state secrets or personal confidences. "I shall shoot no bullets or even arrows at my old colleagues," he says; "I have never regarded the ambush as a decent substitute for argument." Drawing upon the history of this century and his own experience, he is concerned with the exercise of the "vast but finite power" of the United States in the immediate and near future. The task of reassessing the national interest "is damnably difficult, requiring tough-mindedness and the avoidance of moralistic mush. It is no job for the starry-eyed" nor for "political leaders who survive by milking the cliches of the past." No argument here.

In a vivid and readable style he recites the harsh realities that confront America—the challenge of communism in Asia and Europe, the possibility of nuclear war, and the revolutionary ferment in the Third World. Because of rapid decolonization, he says, all new states "have been born weak and poor" and many "prematurely." This "perilous passage of

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more than a billion people from colonial status to at least juridical independence" has been "both sweet and bitter, exhilarating and disappointing, encouraging and frustrating." The "demise of colonialism" has meant a new burden for the United States because someone "must provide the emerging states with the kind of help and protection they formerly derived from" the metropolitan powers.

Ball deserves special tribute for his honest picture of political problems in the Third World toward which, it might be said, Washington has a kind of imperial responsibility but without imperial authority. Our power, always to be exercised with restraint and compassion, should not be used to reform other governments, but rather to help preserve the fabric of peace so that constructive political and economic development can move forward. Ball's thoughtful suggestions for U.S. policy in Asia, Africa and Latin America merit careful attention.

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The fundamental thesis of his book is that a politically united Western Europe is the cornerstone of the better world. To escape from our "breathless universalism," he insists we must declare the Northern Zone — Western Europe, the Soviet Union, and Japan — our top priority. In this Zone lie our most vital interests. The Southern areas are "peripheral." To achieve a stable power balance, the Western European states must unite into a "second Western power, capable of sharing with the United States the burdens and decisions of the West" and able to cushion the confrontation between Washington and Moscow. This "third superpower" could also help solve the problems in the Middle East and Southern areas.

In contrast to the angry men in and outside the U.S. Senate, Ball is mild and constructive. In contrast to the universal system-builders, his proposal for a new European super-state seems more modest than it really is. Perhaps Ball is more apocalyptic than he realizes. He does allow himself some extravagant prose: We may be witnessing "the dawn of a new age of reason and progress, or a gigantic 'back to nature' movement on a world scale." Elsewhere he asserts that "human institutions have never kept pace with human requirements." He speaks of "the brave new world," which presumably must be built on the brave, if not new, foundation of a "third superpower."

His proposal for a new European super-state raises questions of feasibility and desirability. On feasibility, John W. Holmes, Director General of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, puts it bluntly. Acknowledging the theoretical desirability of "tripolarity over bipolarity," Holmes says Ball's proposal "just

doesn't happen to fit the facts of earthly life. Foreigners stubbornly refuse to be amalgamated as Uncle George knows is best for them" (*Survival*, October 1968).

History demonstrates that it takes generations if not centuries to build a viable nation-state like France, Britain, or Italy. None of these states, or any other state for that matter, has shown the slightest disposition to surrender its sovereignty, all at once or even piecemeal. Further, by definition sovereignty cannot be shared. Like virginity, you have it or you don't. The multi-state system, which is the only system the world has ever had, is based on the premise that each state is legally sovereign — it can act without asking permission of any external authority.

While all states — new and old, powerful and weak — insist on their sovereign right, each of them has in fact cooperated on occasion with other states to defend, uphold, or pursue mutual or parallel interests. This is the meaning of NATO. The "grand alliance" is not an abridgement of state sovereignty but a fulfillment of state sovereignty. Where there is a common perception of danger and a common will to face it together, the modalities of cooperation are relatively easy to work out. The modalities are always secondary. They can be effective whether they are formal or informal, public or secret, jerry-built or long standing. There is no legal, political, or moral imperative, categorical or otherwise, asserting that the most fateful problems of peace and justice can be dealt with effectively only by manipulating legal structures or by reducing or increasing the number of sovereign states in the drama. On the contrary, there is a moral imperative calling upon the actors to use the resources at hand.

There is nothing inherently unworkable in the present multi-state system. If each government minded its own business, and occasionally helped other friendly governments, there would be peace. But since some governments, particularly those motivated by messianic political religions, persist in violating the political or territorial integrity of other states, there is the constant threat or reality of war. Under these circumstances, which are likely to last for a very long time, the endangered states have the right to cooperate with other states to defend their rights and interests. This is the basis of alliances and bilateral military aid programs. Whether these alliances and programs are good or bad depends on whether they are used to protect the legitimate rights of states or to violate these rights.

Ball's European super-state is not feasible. Nor is it necessary. But if it were feasible, would it be desirable? It may or may not be. Suppose the govern-

ment of the new super-state would side with the Soviet Union against the United States? That is theoretically possible, and under certain conditions probable. Structural manipulation is not the answer to mitigating the dangers of world politics. These dangers can be lessened only by wise state policies rooted in balance of power strategies and complimented by constant efforts to develop avenues of cooperation along parallel interests.

Formal multi-state arrangements such as the Common Market and the Coal and Steel Community, like alliances, are affirmations rather than denials of state sovereignty.

To turn back to George Ball. I recommend his statesmanlike and thoughtful book in spite of his occasional lapse into apocalyptic rhetoric, his overly structural approach, and his central proposal for a "third superpower." Let him speak for himself.

"I have entitled this book *The Discipline of Power* because . . . we have tended in recent years to use our power not *arrogantly* . . . but *exuberantly*. That exuberance has shown itself in our tendency to fill vacuums quickly and preemptively — not always counting the cost or the profit — as well as our weakness for lecturing older metropolitan countries with just a touch of self-righteousness . . . I would not . . .

want to put aside our exuberance altogether — merely to temper it with practical and conceptual thought."

Ball warns against placing great store in garnering votes at the United Nations, especially if it involves "undignified lobbying," adding that he "never thought it appropriate for a great power to be the supplicant of much smaller nations."

We should, he advises, exchange "a poorly articulated universalism for a measured employment of our finite resources." Though we have great power and wealth, "the world today has grown far too complicated and dangerous for the United States to mold and manage world affairs without the active help of others who share our humane political heritage and aspirations and our security requirements."

How new will the better world be? Not very. But the new world has some chance of being a little bit better if compassionate realists, rather than tired cynics, crusading idealists, or revolutionary ideologues, are at the helm in the great powers. America is fortunate. We have never had a cynic or a utopian as President. Either would have been a disaster and for the same reasons. The cynic and the utopian, each in his own way, flee from the moral-political arena of live options where the real decisions of war and peace, tyranny and freedom are made.

current reading

Diplomatic Persuaders

John Lee, ed. Wiley. 205 pp. \$8.50

Although the book is subtitled "New Role of the Mass Media in International Affairs," most of the press attachés and information officers called upon for comments have described briefly their own duties in attempting to present the "truth" about their countries to the U.S. public. Represented here are Sweden, Venezuela, Zambia, the Philippines, Spain, India, England, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Mainland China (in an American expert's view), and the USIA and U.N.

Alternatives to Violence

Larry Ng, ed. Time-Life Books. 159 pp. \$1.00 (paper).

"The purpose of this book is to stimulate dialogue," notes the preface; providing "an overview to serve as catalyst for further creative thinking and effective action." There are 21 essays on the sources of human destructiveness and of domestic and international violence—most of them brief—by people of diverse views and professional concerns. Among them: Eric Fromm, Arthur Koestler, Morris L. West, Henry Ford II, Timothy Leary, Harvey Wheeler, S. Radhakrishnan, Harold D. Lasswell, Robert McNamara and Arnold Toynbee.

The Arab-Israeli Dilemma

Fred J. Khouri. Syracuse. 436 pp. \$10.00

A political scientist specializing in Middle Eastern affairs, Dr. Khouri spent many years studying primary and secondary source material on the Arab-Israeli problem, and in the course of travels in the area held discussions with government officials, scholars, religious and political leaders, refugees, and U.N. officials. This study attempts a "comprehensive" and "objective" review of the problem from its earliest beginnings to the present day, concluding with a step-by-step approach to a series of *partial solutions* to improve the political atmosphere and narrow the scope of conflict.

A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy

Irving Howe, ed. Praeger. 349 pp. \$6.95

The editor of the socialist quarterly *Dissent* has gathered here, (as Lewis Coser notes in his introduction), "a variety of writers on the radical Left . . . united only by their overall commitment to a democratic, radical, and libertarian vision," who examine a wide range of issues which affect U.S. foreign policy. Among the contributors: Michael Harrington, Arnold S. Kaufman, William Pfaff, Ronald Steel, Walter Laquer, Gunnar Myrdal, Robert L. Heilbroner, George Lichtheim.