

# Toward a Genuine “Structure of Peace”

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The principal occupation of the Nixon Administration was an attempt to build what it called a “structure of peace.” President Ford has made it perfectly clear that he agrees with the basic thrust of his predecessor’s foreign policy. Public opinion polls show that a majority of the American people share Ford’s assessment of the Nixon Administration’s alleged achievements in world affairs. I propose to challenge the basis on which they intend to build that structure and to pose an alternative basis. Before positing that alternative I will compare the Nixon-Kissinger grand design with other policies that compete for our allegiance today.

Nixon and Ford have depended in part on a balance of power to preserve peace. Pope Paul VI, on the other hand, while considered generally sympathetic to the policy of détente, has repeated the ancient wisdom of Catholicism (and some other religions certainly) in calling for a peace founded on “a reconciliation of hearts” and human understanding and deploring the arms race and the pursuit of peace “through the terror of unheard-of destruction and suffering.” In a message delivered on January 1, 1975, the Pope recalled the words of the Second Vatican Council: “Peace must be born of mutual trust between the nations rather than imposed on them through fear of one another’s weapons.” He also noted the Council’s warning that politicians and diplomats work in vain at building peace “so long as feelings of hostility, contempt and distrust, as well as racial hatred and unbending ideologies, continue to divide men and place them in opposing camps.” The balance of power, temporary suspension of conflicts among nations (the Middle East), truces and armistices (Northern Ireland and Indochina) are all inadequate as foundations for a genuine structure of peace, the Pope said. “An imposed peace, a utilitarian and provisional peace, is not enough. Progress must be made toward a peace which is loved, free and brotherly, founded, that is, on a reconciliation of hearts.”

It is no criticism of the *truth* of the Pope’s remarks to say that they are not very helpful to statesmen operating in the *practical* world. Henry Kissinger has

written about the contrasting roles of “prophets” and statesmen, and no doubt puts the Pope in the former category.

All recorded history attests to the fact that human nature is incapable of fully realizing the noble (and indeed valid) ideals of the higher religions. In his *City of God* St. Augustine observed that despite the bond of a common human nature, people the world over are divided against each other. Their competitive appetites and differing ideas and interests lead them to seek their goals in ways that frustrate realization of the ideals of the human race. Pope John XXIII gave contemporary man a very different sort of message. His *Pacem in Terris* stresses hope, courage, and confidence regarding the prospects for the City of Man. Pope Paul professed to see that “peaceful concord among men is spreading, through the progressive discovery of the complementarity and interdependence of countries.” Statesmen may be more in accord with the picture drawn by the French historian and scientist Jean Fourastié, who wrote at the beginning of this year:

The 1929 crisis was tough, but it was only an economic crisis. Today the damage is deeper. A crisis of civilization means that the very foundations of our lives have been shaken. Ideologies disintegrate, religions fall sick, philosophy dies. The arts, literature, the cinema present only hubbub, fury and ruin. Young people are upset or unstable. The elderly unconscious or stupefied, adults fall back on excitement and frenzy in order to forget their own state of disarray. The same frenzy possesses whole nations. Vengeance, pride, intolerance, fear everywhere. The clangor of arms and armed dictatorships....

Perhaps both a long-run movement toward more concord and cooperation and a short-run pattern of much chaos and conflict share the stage.

The Nixon-Ford “Grand Design” or “structure of peace” can be summarized as follows. Peace is a by-product of a stable international order. Stability in world affairs requires agreement among the major powers on what Kissinger has called “permissible aims and methods of foreign policy.” That is, statesmen must pursue only legitimate interests in a moderate manner. Such an agreement can only be attained if the leading countries accept the legitimacy of each

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other's internal political-economic systems and agree to "live and let live" in a world of diversity.

Although Kissinger emphasizes the necessity of major countries' "exercising restraint" and limiting their ambitions in foreign policies, he is realistic enough to know that without a balance of power nations will not limit their aims. Many in the Western world have not understood the necessity of adequate military power as a backdrop to negotiations between this country and the Soviet Union, and China as well. Although Nixon and Kissinger at times claimed far too much for their policy of "negotiation not confrontation" with the Soviet Union, they also did periodically remind the country and the entire West of the need for substantial military power.

A play upon fear of nuclear war has been a major debating weapon in Kissinger's effort to ward off critics of the Nixon-Ford posture in world affairs. The fact that nuclear war must be avoided does not mean that the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have ceased being what Kissinger calls "revolutionary states." For the evidence is all too clear that despite their bitter differences and their rivalry for leadership of the fractured Communist movement, both Moscow and Peking continue to proclaim the inevitability of global Communist triumph.

Perhaps the major flaw in the so-called "structure of peace" is that it constitutes an attempt to build a stable world order prior to the establishment of a genuine world community. The leading powers are divided over the merits of democracy and communism. Russia and China see the present period of history as one of decaying "capitalism" and emergent "socialism" and ultimately "communism." They accept neither the legitimacy of non-Communist systems nor that of the present international order.

To the Russians, as Malcolm Mackintosh has recently reminded us, "the United States is fundamentally a hostile power, to be weakened and outwitted wherever possible." Détente is only a tactic designed to obtain several concrete objectives: (1) forestalling a Sino-American "axis" aimed at the USSR; (2) gaining American and West European formal ratification of Soviet control of Eastern Europe (at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe); (3) obtaining Western and Japanese technological assistance and easy credit to help overcome economic backwardness in the USSR; (4) removing West European incentive to integrate by presenting an appearance of a tamed Russian bear; (5) weakening NATO and fostering an ultimate American withdrawal of its forces from Western Europe. This all adds up to a Soviet quest for consolidation and expansion of its power, not accommodation with the West (or with China).

As for Peking's purpose, Chou En-lai has been publicly frank for all who care to know China's real aim in seeking an improvement in Sino-American relations. He has called the Chinese-U.S. tie both "temporary and superficial." Temporary because it is only in-

tended to last for so long as China needs America to deter the Russians. At times one must try to use "secondary" enemies (the weakening U.S.) against "primary" enemies (the threatening USSR). Superficial because until final Communist victory over "capitalism" revolutions and wars are inevitable, and therefore Nixon's talk of a "generation of peace" was foolish.

All this is not to say that America should abandon the pursuit of arms control and other agreements with Moscow and Peking, or that the attempt to exploit the Moscow-Peking rift is unwise. But the effort to arrive at accords with the leading totalitarian nations in order to try to reduce the hazard of nuclear war is not a substitute for an effort to build a genuine "structure of peace." So long as Moscow and Peking continue to proclaim the inevitability of and to pursue the establishment of a Communist globe it will not be possible to build a stable and just world order. However, America and the other two dozen or so democracies can undertake steps now aimed both at coordinating their present response to the Communist challenge, as well as to the needs of the Third and Fourth worlds, and at erecting a viable world community and global order in the long run.

It is unhappily true that the historical record does not indicate that the kind of peace preached by Pope Paul can be realized. Nevertheless, the experience of democratic nations shows that a large measure of freedom, equality, and justice can be realized within countries. Judged by absolute or utopian standards, democracies fall very short of their professed ideals. But evaluation of democracies in realistic, relative terms, taking into account imperfect human nature, discloses that they outperform authoritarian and totalitarian political systems on most counts. Gwendolen Carter and John Herz have said: "As we look over our list of weaknesses and shortcomings of liberal democracy, we may feel discouraged.... Before we make a judgment, however, let us note that democratic theory has always been inclined to measure realities with the yardstick of ideals that have hardly been realizable."

Alexander Groth has analyzed contemporary political systems and evaluated their performance in terms of relative benefits and burdens of public policy. He concludes that democracies perform better than alternative systems in combining respect for religious, intellectual, cultural, and political liberty with fostering of economic and social justice. Americans are so aware of economic and racial inequities and injustice in their country that many of them exaggerate its shortcomings. John Roche recently shed some light on the comparative nature of politics by remarking that he could not recall reading any news stories about West Berliners being shot trying to escape over the Wall into East Berlin, or about Hong Kong youths caught trying to swim to the People's Republic of China.

Although democracies are on the whole superior in

their performance to authoritarian and totalitarian systems, they cannot be easily established or maintained. We have learned from the experience of the Western democracies that certain prerequisites must exist in order to have free political institutions. Reinhold Niebuhr once summed up these prerequisites as follows:

(1) the unity and solidarity of the community, sufficiently strong to allow the free play of competitive interests without endangering the unity of the community itself; (2) a belief in the freedom of the individual and appreciation of his worth; and (3) a tolerable harmony and equilibrium of social and political and economic forces necessary to establish an approximation of social justice.

Most would add that a certain measure of economic well-being is necessary to establish successful democracies. Where the few have much and many have little democracies break down. Achieving these prerequisites is a matter of several generations. Therefore, the extension of democracy around the globe is at best a long-run matter. Some countries may never achieve free political institutions.

In an age of nuclear weapons, in which not only the threat of nuclear Armageddon but also chronic conventional and guerrilla wars plague humankind, it is surely of great importance that no democracies have gone to war with each other in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Serious and even bitter differences have arisen between and among democracies, but the ultimate arbiter of war has not been resorted to for their resolution. Indeed, many call Western Europe, or that part of it found in the nine-nation European Community, a "no-war" region, that is, an area of the globe where war is unthinkable among the member countries. Given humanity's unruly nature and the record of its history it would surely be rash to suggest that even a completely or largely democratic world would abolish war. Even a world federal and democratic government could be faced with what would amount to civil wars (as have many nations throughout history). But the fact remains that the record shows democracies have not gone to war with each other, and therefore the prospects for greater (not perfect) peace and justice would be enhanced in a largely democratic world order.

Given this record of a large measure of stability and justice within democracies, and peace among them "in our time," is it not clear what a genuine "structure of peace" requires? The energy, inflation, and recession crises have brought forth a larger measure of cooperation among the Western democracies and Japan than was the case during the Nixon Administration. Then the former President and Secretary of State Kissinger were preoccupied with the pursuit of détente with both Moscow and Peking and with extrication of American fighting forces from the Vietnam morass. The Middle East, of

course, also got much attention.

The limits of détente with Moscow and Peking have been suggested and are now becoming clear to more and more people in the West. As a result of the Russian and Chinese arming of North Vietnam, which enabled the latter to wage its all-out conventional war of aggression, even Henry Kissinger—for the first time since his arrival in Washington in January, 1969—publicly rebuked Moscow and Peking. He said in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April: "We shall not forget who supplied the arms which North Vietnam used to make a mockery of its signature on the Paris accords." Unhappily, Kissinger in that speech also asserted that his overall "design" in world affairs "still stands." But the Nixon-Ford-Kissinger approach is being increasingly challenged in Congress and the media as well as in the universities and the career foreign affairs bureaucracies.

Raymond Aron has pointed out that a measure of trust among nations is necessary for stability, accommodation, and peace. A balance of power is important even in relations among democracies, and is absolutely indispensable in democratic nations' relations with "revolutionary" (and old-fashioned expansionist) countries. But a consensus on ideals and on means is also necessary if the long elusive "just and lasting peace" is to be realized.

The League of Nations and the United Nations have demonstrated the limits and inherent weaknesses of international organizations whose members lack a consensus on moral and political ideals and goals. Although both the League and the U.N. have many achievements to their credit in humanitarian areas, neither was able to fulfill the hopes and dreams of their founders in the area of peace and security. The great issues of the interwar period and of the cold war since World War II have been resolved almost entirely outside the League and U.N.

Recently a so-called Trilateral Commission was formed by some two hundred leaders in America, Canada, Western Europe, and Japan. This group of foreign policy experts champions more cooperation among the industrialized democracies, and coordination of constructive Western and Japanese policies toward the Third and Fourth worlds. The Commission takes the position that genuine accommodation with the Communist giants can be achieved only if the industrialized democracies are a more cohesive and constructive force in the world. The democracies must do better both in cooperating with each other in defense, trade and monetary, and development matters, and in reducing the gap between themselves and the have-not nations of the world.

While many observers are sympathetic to this view of priorities in American foreign policy, the Commission does not deal with the issue of a genuine "structure of peace." There is today no long-run goal that can rally the energies and enthusiasm of the people of

the democracies. And it is apparent that the people in the West and Japan are uninspired by the pursuit of détente with Moscow and Peking, as well as with foreign aid and other instruments of the democratic nations' relations with the Third and Fourth worlds.

America and the other democracies desperately need a "conceptual breakthrough." Or perhaps it is closer to the truth to say the democracies need to recover their former confidence in the validity of their ideas and ideals and their political systems. Before the First World War most people in the West took it for granted that democracy, scientific progress, and international peace were the "wave of the future." But the Great War of 1914-18, the Great Depression of 1929-39, the "Greater War" of 1939-45, the emergence of Nazi, Fascist, and Communist totalitarianism, and the failure of democracy to take root in most of the countries of the Third World combined to shatter the old optimism.

**I**t will no doubt strike many as incredible to hear a plea for a restoration of democratic faith and confidence in the light of the contemporary condition. Perhaps it is too late and too much to hope for such a recapture of conviction and vitality. But then surely not even Americans can engage in masochism without end. Even if one thinks that an awful lot of post-Watergate hypocrisy and old politics under new labels is going on at the moment, it is nevertheless possible that the general aspiration for a new start could include a new determination in the arena of foreign policy as well. After all, it was Richard Nixon, perpetrator of domestic political skullduggery, who conned so much of the nation into believing that he was building a lasting "structure of peace."

Nixon and Kissinger's laudable effort to build a stable world order via accords with Moscow and Peking was doomed to failure. It founders on the facts of philosophical and political incompatibility of democracies and totalitarian regimes. These differing systems can indeed reach limited agreements on the basis of some mutual interests—most important, the need to avoid a nuclear holocaust. But they cannot cooperate in creation of a lasting international system that will combine stability and peaceful change, given the aspirations for global communism and the differing morality and methods of the totalitarians.

Although one can agree with Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger on the difficulty of trying to foster democratic evolution within the USSR, one has also to agree with those who say that without such an evolution relations between the West and Russia will be clouded with suspicion and danger. America simply cannot have truly cooperative relations with a country seeking to undermine its whole system. In this sense "détente without democracy" in Russia is both illusory and dangerous, as Andrei Sakharov among others has argued.

If humankind is to approximate its age-old dream of a "just and lasting peace," a genuine "structure of peace" must be built. And no one has yet improved upon the idea of a union of the existing democratic nations of the world that could serve as a stepping-stone to an ultimate world democratic federation. Among other prophets of this notion, Clarence Streit remains one of the most venerable. Since the eve of World War II Streit has been preaching this gospel. The democracies, of course, did not listen before that disaster, and have not responded so far to his call in the generation since 1945.

But the idea lingers on. In spite of all the tragedies of the twentieth century and the continuing moral-intellectual malaise, the notion of union of the democracies remains appealing and plausible as a long-run if not a short-run or middle-range goal. With all the trials and tribulations of democracies today, do many doubt their superiority to authoritarian and totalitarian systems? There may be a dearth of leaders, and many people may be bamboozled and confused. Nevertheless, only a few voices are heard claiming that the alternative political systems of our time are preferable in terms of their impact on human welfare.

If the democracies are on balance doing more for the welfare of their people than are the totalitarian and authoritarian countries, it is also true that relations among democracies are better than relations between democracies and nondemocratic nations. In spite of all present examples of growing political and economic isolationism and nationalism, the democracies continue to cooperate as well as quarrel within various organizations such as OECD, GATT, and NATO. They are trying currently to coordinate their responses to the crises of energy and food, among other things.

While it is by no means inevitable, it surely remains possible that the democracies can recapture their vitality and self-confidence, and handle their pressing domestic and foreign problems with some degree of success. This in turn would influence the Communist and Third World estimates of the viability of the democratic idea and system. In time it would erode the historical self-confidence of the totalitarians, as well as influence the direction of the Third World.

John XXIII and Paul VI were right to call for a peace based on love and brotherhood. But the record of the democratic countries proves that within nations a measure of human welfare and concord can be achieved, and this is a first step. The task thus remains to extend the democratic achievement to other nations (not by force, needless to say) and to achieve a democratic global order. These are long-run goals, not to be realized in this century, perhaps not to be reached at all. But both reason and experience suggest that this difficult path is the most, or perhaps the only, viable way to achieve a genuine "structure of peace."