

The Legacy of Vietnam edited by Anthony Lake

(New York University Press; 428 pp.; \$20.00)

Setting National Priorities edited by Henry Owen and Charles Schultze

(Brookings Institution; 618 pp.; \$14.95/\$6.95)

Barry Rubin

The greatest single factor shaping the new era in American foreign policy is the Vietnam war. The question is not whether people and policymakers are drawing lessons from Vietnam but, rather, which of several lessons they will decide to follow.

The contributors to these books include a number of influential international affairs specialists. Several of them, including Henry Owen, advised Jimmy Carter during the campaign; others such as Anthony Lake, who now heads the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, are charged with formulating diplomatic strategy. Their views are of special value in understanding the direction of the Carter administration.

The dominant fear they express is that of isolationism. As disillusionment with World War I produced a wave of opposition to international involvement in the 1920's and 1930's, there is the possibility that Vietnam will do the same. The cold war's "Munich analogy"—aggressors must not be appeased but stopped as early as possible—might be replaced by a "Vietnam analogy"—overseas activism leads to expensive, immoral messes, and any intervention can escalate endlessly.

With the "Vietnam analogy" the U.S. might be paralyzed, as demonstrated in the Angola crisis. At the same time, after losing 55,000 dead and 300,000 wounded in the Indochina conflict, and after spending \$150 billion there, a cautious approach by the American people is completely understandable.

Lake attempts to synthesize these concerns. Vietnam has brought "a welcome shift toward recognition of the limits to American power and responsibility." This should lead to greater humility and caution rather than self-

hatred or indifference to foreign events: "If we react with the nationalism of either an aggressive...selfishness or a defensive mood of introspection, we shall continue to suffer from the experience."

A 1976 Potomac Associates' study illustrates the effects of the last decade, finding a complete reversal in the American people's priorities. In 1964 the five items of greatest popular concern were all related to foreign affairs and defense. Now, however, "keeping our military and defense force strong" has dropped to eleventh place, below ten domestic issues. While 52 per cent believed that the U.S. should maintain its dominant world position "at all costs, even going to the brink of war," the proportion of isolationists increased from 8 per cent to 23 per cent. Americans want their country to be "number one" but are not willing to pay the necessary price.

The current policy debate can be understood through a classification of the different arguments. There seem to be five general positions:

Isolationists: Isolationists agree that America's primary problems and interests are at home. *Conservative Isolationists* tend to be parochial, to feel that the world is decadent and involvement can only sully the United States. *Liberal Isolationists* feel that the U.S. is not good enough for the world—that American actions abroad, inevitably directed by big corporations and imperial strategists, must lead to reaction, the wasting of money and the postponement of domestic reform. Both groups assume that America has a choice about whether or not to play a major international role. Liberal isolationism appeals to many intellectuals and politicians, while its counterpart is more popular with the general public.

Internationalists: Internationalists agree that America must bear major world responsibilities and that failure to do so can only result in severe damage to American interests and, eventually, a threat to the U.S. itself. They tend to transfer domestic beliefs—moral and ideological considerations—into foreign policy. *Conservative Internationalists* like John Foster Dulles stress opposition to communism and link it to left-of-center nationalism. *Liberal Internationalists* believe in the centrality of the cold war but also argue that America strengthens its own position by making economic development and democratization abroad a priority. The Kennedy administration and, at least in theory, Senators Patrick Moynihan and Hubert Humphrey, would all fall into this category.

Realists: This group has the smallest popular base but represents a high proportion of international affairs specialists and policymakers. They see the "game of nations" as a conflict between great powers to be resolved by reconciling contradictory interests in a stable balance of power. Moral and ideological issues are distractions, and the USSR is seen as just another great power, having limited international objectives. Since U.S. power and resources are limited, priorities must be established, and there are some areas of the world that are not worth defending. Marxist takeovers will not necessarily benefit the USSR because national interests take precedence over ideology, as seen in China and Yugoslavia. George Kennan and Henry Kissinger are among representatives of Realist positions.

Recent conflicts within the Democratic party have tended to be between Liberal Internationalists and Liberal Isolationists, while Republican party battles have been between Realists and Conservative Internationalists.

One central difficulty for the Realists is that, while they wish to limit U.S. commitments, they also face a credibility squeeze. If we do not defend outlying areas, even if not of great strategic value, we will lose credibility and support elsewhere in the world. Kissinger called this factor "linkage." To maintain credibility Kennan supported U.S. commitments to "unimportant" countries like Greece and South Korea, and Kissinger sought "peace with honor" (read: "peace with credibility for U.S.

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power and determination") in Vietnam.

This classification also spotlights some important considerations for the Carter administration. First, most of Carter's advisors are Realists. U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young represents some Liberal Isolationist thinking, while Carter himself seems to be a Liberal Internationalist. Differences between the president and his top aides will bear watching.

Further, the Realist concepts of retrenchment may be able to channel domestic isolationist feelings by cutting back on commitments abroad and by promoting détente. Yet Realism may also reinforce and become a prisoner of such isolationist feeling.

Third, one wonders how many Liberal Internationalist ideas for overseas reform will be applied by Carter. Humphrey writes in Lake's book that we have a right to determine that our aid is used effectively. Recipients should have to "make tough political-economic decisions, such as those relating to equitable tax structures, land reform, family planning or price and wage controls." The early emphasis on "human rights" has an understandable

appeal in this country. It is a "clean" and inexpensive theme within American traditional concerns, and, to a point, it is acceptable to all domestic factions.

In the longer run, though, Humphrey argues, it is necessary to tread carefully the line between the "imperative of helpfulness" and the recognition of the "principle of not meddling" in the internal affairs of others. This "moralism" is not merely a product of naive idealism but comes from the hard-headed knowledge that "repressive actions on the parts of regimes with which we are allied can be detrimental to our interests."

Perhaps most important is the danger that the Realists will play into the hands of isolationism. Sam Brown, in his article in *The Legacy of Vietnam*, makes a fascinating point in this regard. The antiwar movement failed to end the war, and its fading during Nixon's first term happened because the president was able to manipulate the major American concerns: Don't lose American lives, don't waste American money. This manipulation was evident in Vietnamization and the shift to the air war. Nixon used Conservative Isolationism to fight

the Liberal Isolationism that dominated the antiwar movement. The Nixon Doctrine, placing a greater burden on allies, can also be interpreted differently by its Realist and Isolationist supporters.

This potential convergence is best seen in Earl Ravenal's article in Lake's book and in Henry Owen's piece in the Brookings volume. Over everything hangs the stress on the limits of American power. Many of the arguments are directed against direct military intervention, but they seem also to apply to more limited exercises of influence. "We cannot use force effectively except in defense of vital interests that are widely recognized as such by the American public," writes Owen. "Outside Europe, Japan and the Middle East, few such interests can be perceived. Violation of this rule will waste our substance and divide our people."

This sounds reasonable. But what if we are in a situation—as we are at present—in which many Americans and many members of Congress see a strong commitment, even in terms of supplying large amounts of aid, as potentially leading to military involvement? Such is the logic of the "Vietnam

analogy," and it is one that could cripple U.S. activity in almost the entire Third World.

Owen is right in saying that our greatest interests lie with the European-Japanese industrial centers, the proximate areas of the Caribbean and Latin America, and Israel. But are these regions best protected by retreat? Third World countries do lack the military power to threaten our security, and only oil-producing states have organized their economic clout. Yet interests of credibility, strategic choke-points, and other raw materials suppliers remain. Even Owen calls for promoting economic and social progress, maintaining the flow of oil, and avoiding a racial bloodbath in Southern Africa.

For Africa Owens puts forward the nationalism-over-ideology theory: "The communist countries will probably be disappointed by the speed with which their erstwhile allies turn to a policy of national self-reliance, treating the USSR and the United States with even-handed disdain, modified only slightly by a desire for economic and military aid." Soviet inroads into Angola, Mozambique, and other African countries should not be treated so lightly. Increased Soviet prestige in Af-

rica, new bases for the Soviet navy (along the main oil routes), the creation of secure rear areas for radical forces (as in the invasion of Zaire) add up to important political changes.

The primacy of national interests may not hold for countries dependent on a great power for economic and military support when a regime needs such support against its own people. We have seen this happen to regimes dependent on the U.S. (the whole human rights pressure campaign is predicated on making use of such influence). A government may prefer national interest over transnational ideology, but it will prefer its own survival above all. The combination of Marxist ideology and dependency will strongly incline a country to be a friend and ally of the Russians and an enemy of the United States. In countries such as Egypt and India, which have broken from Soviet ties, the ideology part of the equation was quite weak. On the other hand Cuba—where both factors are present—has steadily moved closer to Russian positions.

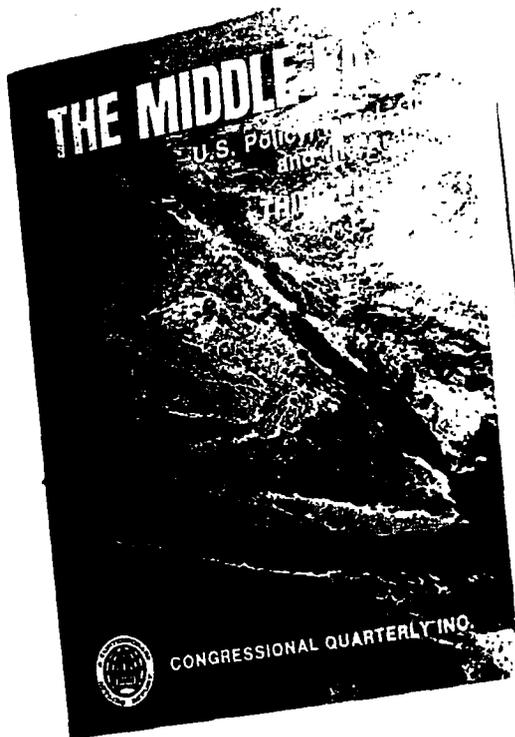
The heart of the new Realist thesis is worth citing at some length. Owen writes: "We should reject the notion that our relationship with the USSR requires us to offset its interventions,

wherever they occur, even in regions of no intrinsic strategic importance to us. If the Soviet Union is encouraged by any successes it may achieve in such areas to challenge us in more vital regions, such as Europe, we will be better able to respond if we have not wasted our resources and political capital and divided our people by interventions elsewhere. Our refusal to respond in peripheral areas will be perceived as weakness by the Soviet Union only if we portray it as such in internal debate, failing to make clear the calculations on which it rests."

Can Internationalism be turned on and off so easily? Is retreating to the castles and pulling up the moats the best defense? Are the Russians so naive in perceiving weakness?

If, as Owen argues elsewhere, the Soviet Union can only be dissuaded by a show of power, the policy he advocates would encourage Russian advance. At least Kissinger sought to win Russian cooperation by standing firm in various areas of the world. With Owen's conception American leverage is lost. The Russians will simply move into the Third World power vacuums.

Let them, some argue. They will only overextend themselves and will become hated as imperialists. It is a strange doctrine that pins its hopes on destroy-



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ing an enemy by strengthening him. Given the alliance of Third World dictatorships, so visible in the U.N., that need great power protection and that are so sensitive to changes in the wind, the Russians might receive a better reception than one might expect. Finally, it is precisely because the nuclear/military balance between the two leading powers is so close that other factors—self-confidence, credibility as a friend, willingness to exercise power and to ensure stability—become more important.

Historian Ernest May, writing in Lake's book, provides a strong caution about these varieties of Realism and about the popularity of isolationism. While the previous generation may have "exaggerated perils, passed up real opportunities for negotiation and spent so much on defense that the economy and the political system suffered a distorting militarization," the new opinion leaders one day "may be judged to have underestimated dangers, exaggerated the potentialities of diplomacy, and prepared too little for war."

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Paul Mojzes

"The sympathetic outsider can only ask questions and hint at possible answers, but he is unwise if he attempts to make dogmatic pronouncements." Fred Singleton, director of the only postgraduate school of Yugoslav studies outside Yugoslavia, at the University of Bradford in England, and, in this reviewer's opinion, one of the finest specialists on Yugoslavia in the world, adheres to this precept meticulously and effectively. The result is a book that will for years be used as a basic introductory work on this Eastern European Socialist country that defies, often consciously, all efforts at easy classification. Singleton's very frequent trips to Yugoslavia and his linguistic ability make it possible to keep an accurate and precise assessment

of the complex shifts in Yugoslav life. His very readable narrative, combined with astute scholarship, makes for the best book yet produced in this field.

The book's title is not entirely appropriate. Descriptions of the first half of the century (more precisely, prior to 1945) are merely brief introduction to the major part of the study, which is post-World War II Yugoslavia. Singleton's preoccupation is charting the struggles, with their successes and failures, since the takeover of the country by a Communist leadership. While the Yugoslav experiment in socialism has not been avidly copied elsewhere in toto, it is of interest and fascination to many. In part this is because it is a highly publicized separate road to

socialism (the genuineness of which is often denied by the more "orthodox" Communists of the Soviet or Chinese model), but also because certain features of its praxis proved attractive to other countries. Rumania, for instance, wistfully wishes it could adopt its western neighbor's policy of nonalignment. Certain aspects of worker self-management proved attractive to Hungary, Dubček's Czechoslovakia, and to many West German and Swedish factories, where *Selbstbestimmung* is being adopted as a corporate policy. Algeria is perhaps the one country that most directly copies Yugoslav Socialist patterns. Hence a book like Singleton's not only satisfies the scholarly need for knowledge but provides the reader with