

American Foreign Policy: Focus on Asia

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Let me with broad brush strokes try to describe American foreign policy from World War II to the present; then talk about the cold war; relations with the Soviet Union; very briefly about the Middle East; more about Communist China; even more perhaps about what I would call the "emerging nationalism," that is, the underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Finally, I will end up with Vietnam because how we get out of Vietnam, how we leave what has turned out to be a quagmire, will set the tone of international politics for decades to come, perhaps for the rest of this century.

At the end of World War II, the United States, somewhat to its surprise, found itself faced with a cold war with the Soviet Union. We were faced with a monolithic Communist world in which Moscow called the tune. We were faced with an essentially aggressive Communist world, in which they were probing, testing our defenses and the will and determination of the non-Communist world. Basically, I think the United States handled its relations with the Soviet Union rather well. We understood the requirements of deterrence. Even those who were critical of American foreign policy, such as George Kennan, were critical of our having overreacted, rather than not reacting at all. Perhaps we did overreact at times to the so-called Communist threat, and perhaps we were a little slow to realize when the threat diminished. Perhaps we kept up our fighting stance a little longer than was necessary; but on the whole, I think we handled it rather well. I think the Marshall Plan, the rebuilding of

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Europe, will go down in history as a farsighted, generous act of policy, really the first time in the world's history that a nation has taxed itself to build not only our devastated allies' countries but also our exenemies. I think we can be proud of that.

In terms of dealing with the underdeveloped world, we started off very good indeed. We recognized that colonialism was dead and we were on the right side of history in that we favored independence movements for India, for Indonesia, for our own excolony, the Philippines, and so on. It may come as a surprise to some people to learn that at the end of World War II we were supporting Ho Chi Minh, the leader of the Communist North. Our OSS agents (I was in OSS at the time) were with Ho Chi Minh. Our support was for him because he was the leader of the nationalist or independence movement in Vietnam. President Roosevelt was convinced that independence and the end of colonialism was the future.

Now our support for independence movements was somewhat tarnished by the cold war. I don't think we had much choice. As the Soviet Union probed out and pushed, we found ourselves in a cold war. We found ourselves faced with a more or less monolithic Communist world, and therefore, we had to compromise or adjust our support for the independence movements. I would not necessarily say it was bad, I would say it was tarnished.

I think the great failure in foreign policy in the postwar years was our China policy. We became doctrinaire, rigid, ideological, and dogmatic. We did not handle our relations with Communist China in essentially the "wise way" that we did with the Soviet Union. With the Soviet Union we put up a posture of deterrence to their probes, but at the same time continued to negotiate with them. With China we simply put up a posture of deterrence and attempted to isolate China. I think this was a mistake.

So where are we now? We are in an entirely different period. The cold war is undergoing a transformation. Indeed, the Soviet Union is undergoing a transformation. In the first place, we are no longer faced with a Communist monolith. The truth of the matter is that world communism is in disarray. The Sino-Soviet dispute is a fundamental fact

of this disarray. This is as important an international political fact as anything that has happened in our day. The truth of the matter is that even if China and the Soviet Union someday restore friendly relations it will never be the same. Never again will Moscow be able to dictate to Peking. If friendly relations are restored, it will be more similar to the relations between Washington and London or Washington and Paris. Even in the eastern European Communist nations, the Soviet Union no longer can dictate in the way it once did. I say this in spite of Czechoslovakia. The Soviet Union panicked when it thought that Czechoslovakia was going so far as to become anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and prowestern. In Poland and Rumania there is an independence from Moscow that did not exist a few years ago. They will continue to be loyal allies of the Soviet Union, do not misunderstand me. I only mean that they are not quite the puppets they once were. We are dealing with an entirely different situation. I think the implications of this situation are that, whereas we once had a policy toward the Communist world, we now must have a policy toward Moscow, toward Warsaw, another toward Prague, another toward Hanoi, another toward Peking, and another toward North Korea.

Now let me repeat that this is not the end of the cold war. I do not wish to suggest that the leopard has changed its spots. The Communist world is still ambitious. The Communist world is still atheistic, if you will. We are not becoming like each other, in spite of changes inside the Soviet Union. The rivalry will continue, but it is a different situation because the Communist world is no longer a monolith. Also, Moscow has had some bitter experiences in the world. First of all, it has had some bitter experiences with the underdeveloped countries. They have poured a billion dollars into Indonesia seeking a war at the time of the West New Guinea crisis in 1962, and they failed. It was a wasted effort. They poured a lot of money into Guinea, who eventually kicked the Soviets out. The same thing happened with Ghana. So they have had a bitter experience in thinking they could make puppets of the underdeveloped world.

The Soviets have had other experiences which have fundamentally altered the Soviet way of looking at the outside world. I'm referring, for example, to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. It was my privilege to be a participant in those

events as director of intelligence of the Department of State. I sat around that table. What happened was that the Soviets and we both looked down a gun barrel of nuclear war and both of us shrank back from the holocaust that we saw at the other end.

For the Soviets we can put it in very crude and simple terms. Communism has claimed that the end justifies the means. In those stark, dramatic days of the Cuban missile crisis, the world's first nuclear crisis, the Soviets came to believe that there was one means that no end could ever justify, and that means would be nuclear war. That would be the end of all ends to have a nuclear war, and I think they came to understand that.

Now this does not mean that they are no longer Communists, but what it does mean is that they are now sober Communists. So I would say that we must make these distinctions about the cold war: that it has changed its nature, that we are not faced with a monolithic communism, and that the Communist world is a sober world.

Let me say something now about the Middle East. We are caught where we have to try to remain friends with both the Arabs and the Israelis. The Soviets are playing games in the Middle East; I think dangerous games. But here again, it is absolutely essential that we do not face a new threat by assuming it is like the last threat. This is not the Soviet Union spreading communism. The Egyptians, Nasser, and his successor Sadat, are not Communists. There is no effective Egyptian Communist party. They're anti-Communists. All the Egyptian Communists are in jail or exiled, but Russia has been giving Egypt and the Arab countries massive amounts of military aid, and there are fifteen thousand Russian advisers manning some of those surface-to-air missile sites in Egypt. But it is a game that has almost nothing to do with communism as an ideology or a doctrine. This is a game that Russia could have played under the czars.

Since I'm going to have some fairly harsh things to say about the Nixon administration's Vietnam policy, I think here I will say the Nixon administration has had a very wise, intelligent, sophisticated Middle East policy. By and large, the progress that has been made in the Middle East toward negotiation and the credit can be given to the Nixon administration. Their bringing about negotiations between the

Israelis and the Arabs has been a very good thing. I do not see that anything else can be done by the United States in the Middle East except what we are doing; that is, reluctantly to support Israel when the arms balance gets out of balance, when the Arabs get too far ahead, and at the same time urgently talk to the Soviets, pointing out the risk they are taking, patiently trying to play upon the differences within the Soviet government.

Now let us turn to east Asia. I will speak more about Asia, not just because I was assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs. I am not a Far East specialist, I am a generalist. I succeeded Averell Harriman, and he's not a Far Eastern expert either. But I would like to talk about the Far East because I think it is vitally important. And I'm thinking now of China.

Let me set the scene by saying that I wish to avoid two traps. One is the trap that Dean Rusk fell into, I believe, shortly before the end of the Johnson administration. He made a speech in which he talked about a billion Chinese in a few decades armed with nuclear weapons. The press quickly labeled this speech rather unfairly the "Yellow Peril" speech. I think it was rather unfair because Rusk gave the image of a Chinese nation so aggressive as to be eager to invade and occupy its neighbors. I do not think this is correct. This is a trap that I wish to avoid. But on the other hand, I do not want to fall into the trap of having you believe that they are a bunch of nice guys. The truth lies somewhere in the middle between these two positions.

Now against that background, let us take a quick look at China. First of all this is a nation of approximately 750 million people. They are ambitious, hard-working, self-disciplined, scientific, artistic—as capable as any other people. They occupy a country of continental size within whose borders are all the resources for making China a great power equal to any in the world. They have had a peculiar history. Their relationship to their neighbors has been either that of master to vassal, or as the sick man of Asia over whose prostrate body other nations—those of the West, and even Japan—trampled almost at will.

The Chinese are now coming out of the trauma of the so-called cultural revolution. First of all, it is not a revolt by the mass of the Chinese peasants against their Communist

tyrants. The masses are not revolting. It has nothing to do with Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists on Taiwan. Chiang is forgotten. I have to say in honesty that the mass of the Chinese people do not know who Chiang is and don't care. He's never going to come back to the mainland in my judgment.

The cultural revolution is one of the few revolutions in the world's history that has come from above. It really stems from Mao Tse-tung's concept of permanent revolution, which includes a constant churning of society so as to prevent the emergence of a new ruling elite. In a practical political sense the cultural revolution is a struggle between several different factions of the Communist party of China.

I would say that the important thing for Americans to remember or to understand about the cultural revolution is that John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's secretary of state, was fundamentally wrong when he said that communism was a passing phase in China. The victors of the cultural revolution will be one or another faction of the Communist party. The Communist party will continue to rule China. Now again, if I had been speaking in the 1950s or the 1940s, to say that China would be ruled by one or another faction of the Communist party would be to say something rather important and significant. To say that today is to say nothing. Which Communist party? Which kind of communism—Stalin's; or Tito's; or Breshnev's and Kosygin's; or Dubcek's somewhat prowestern, anti-Soviet kind of communism; or Mao Tse-tung's kind of communism; or some other kind? They are all as different as day and night. It goes back to what I meant when I said in the beginning that we could no longer have a policy toward communism.

So to say that China will be ruled by one or another faction of the Communist party is to say nothing of any importance. You can say something about who will succeed Mao, but what you say about them largely is that they are Chinese rather than Communists. They will be ambitious, very ambitious, indeed. They will be ambitious to restore China to its former place of dominance in Asia. They will be ambitious to give China a voice in world affairs commensurate with the size of its population, the size of its territory, indeed its stature as a nation.

You could also say that the Communist party that survives and takes over after Mao will be hostile to the outside world. It will be hostile not just to the United States and the West, it will be hostile to its fellow Communist power, the Soviet Union. Partly this is Chinese. Partly it is the history of the Communist party of China—their long march, and their long sojourn in the caves of Yen-an. But they will be hostile to the outside world; whether it is a Communist outside world or non-Communist outside world, they will be hostile.

But at the same time the Chinese will be extraordinarily cautious, extraordinarily realistic in their assessment of what they can do and what they can get away with. Let me illustrate this point by a little anecdote. In 1962, at the time of the Chinese-Indian War, when they fought a very sharp but very short war, President Kennedy sent a team of five people to New Delhi to find out what was happening and what the United States should do. This was headed by Averell Harriman and included myself. When we got to New Delhi it was Thanksgiving Day of 1962. A week or ten days before that, the Chinese armies up in the northeast frontier of India had defeated the Indian army. When we landed in New Delhi, there was not a single battalion of the Indian army standing between us and the mass Chinese armies in the northeast frontier. Yet the Chinese stopped short of the line to which they had some vague historical claim and unilaterally and voluntarily withdrew twelve and one-half miles. Now why did they do this? It wasn't because the Indian army was effective. I think they did it partly out of respect for Indian nationalism, understanding that if they did invade and try to occupy India they would be faced with the kind of guerrilla warfare we have seen to our sorrow in Vietnam. Asian nationalism would fight against a foreign invader.

I think, second of all, they feared a Soviet reaction if they invaded. The Soviets had been encouraging Chinese neutralism, and the Chinese attack on India was a slap in the Soviets' face as well as a humiliation for India.

Finally, I think they feared our possible reaction.

What I'm trying to say is that the Chinese are going to be extraordinarily cautious. It seems to me that our policy of attempting to isolate Communist China should be changed. Many non-Chinese people in Asia think we are the cause of

Chinese aggressiveness because of this policy, that we ought to have the same policy toward China as we have toward the Soviet Union. We should trade with them in anything but military hardware. Instead, we have a policy that we will not trade even nylon stockings. Not only that, we try to twist the arms of our allies to try to prevent them from trading in peaceful, nonmilitary goods. It is a silly policy. It seems to me that it will be a long, hard road. It will be decades before we reach the stage with China that we have reached with the Soviet Union. But as the Chinese say, a journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step. That step is overdue.

Once again, let me pay Mr. Nixon something of a compliment in that he has lifted travel restrictions, a step which I think is in the right direction; but Mr. Nixon ought to move much more rapidly in this direction, more rapidly to bring China into the United Nations.

Now I have emerging nationalism and Vietnam to deal with in fifteen minutes, which is a formidable task. By emerging nationalism, I am thinking of the underdeveloped countries, not only of Asia, but of Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. I think what you're going to see here is a new and virile form of nationalism. You got a taste of it by watching Egypt under Nasser, Indonesia under Sukarno, Ghana under Nkrumah, Cambodia under Shianonk. All these leaders are gone now, but the nationalism continues, and I think you are going to see more of it in more countries. I think nations like the Philippines are going to be taking positions that the unsophisticated will think are anti-American, or antiforeign. Actually, I think it will be pro-Filipino. It will be more nationalistic than anything else.

Let me say that it is hard to understand these virulent nationalisms. For example, they use the verbiage of Marx. They sound like Communists, but they are not Communists. They use a lot of the verbiage of socialism, but in fact they are nationalists.

Predictions in international politics are difficult. My crystal ball is no less cloudy than anyone else's. But if I had to make a predication about the wave of the future, it would be that it is not communism in these underdeveloped countries of the world; nor is it some Pax Americana. It is this new nationalism where they will borrow and choose from social-

ism, from capitalism, and from all the other "isms," and put a large dose of their own traditions in it for their course.

I would like to mention briefly at least four things about the Asian countries which we ought to understand. First, I would like to give you the vision that I see of what is happening out there. For two of three thousand years these people of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and even Latin America have been psychologically, economically, and politically turned inward in essentially a village culture. I was a guerrilla leader in World War II in Southeast Asia, and I can remember operating in Laos, China, Burma, and Thailand, but you never knew which country you were in because the borders are so confused. If you would stop a man on the jungle trail and say, "Who are you?" meaning are you Burmese, Chinese, or Thai, he would say, "I am of the village of Ben Suc," or something similar. If you kept pushing him he might say he was of a certain dialect or a certain region, and finally say, "Oh, I know what you mean; I'm Burmese." But it would take about fifteen minutes for him to get around to that.

This village culture is changing very rapidly now, and you must have an image of these teeming millions of Asia, Africa, and Middle East, awakening, searching for a higher identification, reaching out to a newer, broader identity—the identity of nationalism. The one motive of nationalism is anticolonialism. Most of them have either experienced colonialism or the form of it that China and Thailand got, sort of a gunboat colonialism, even though a colonial regime did not actually take over. It was humiliating in the deepest psychological sense. I could give you examples, but in the interest of time let me say that they know that colonialism is dead. They now talk in terms of neocolonialism, and they fear it. They fear that somehow indirect controls will be re-imposed to replace the direct controls of colonialism.

A second characteristic, I think, is that these people are in what I would call an identity crisis. Who are they? What does it mean to be Vietnamese or Filipino? Many people tend to think that Vietnam is only in a struggle between Communists and anti-Communists. Actually, it is a struggle between several different factions who are attempting to seize the power to be the ones to define what it is to be Vietnamese. And it is difficult. There are psychological

problems. Take the Philippines, a nation of thirty-five million people ethnically homogenous. Most of them are of the Malayan race. Because of the occupation of the Spanish for three hundred years, they are religiously homogenous—Roman Catholic. Yet within that archipelago are spoken some eighty-seven mutually unintelligible languages and dialects. They must conduct their national business in their congress in English, the language of the colonial power, which is already a psychological humiliation. Even the name of the country, for a people searching for a new nationalism, is somewhat humiliating. Instead of harking back to some ancient England or France, or something like that, the name is the Philippines, pawns of King Philip of Spain.

A third characteristic is a fierce desire to modernize. That does not mean a higher standard of living, which they would reject on the grounds of materialism. They do not want a T.V. set in every bedroom and two cars in every garage. They want steel mills, jet aircraft, transportation systems, all the things that make a nation strong and powerful. Mao Tse-tung does not speak for these people, but he said something about his own country, China, that I think strikes a responsive chord in their hearts. He said China has stood up with the image of a giant struggling to its feet from the gutter to look other nations—including the Soviet Union as well as the United States—level in the eye. That is what these people want to do.

Finally, they are fiercely determined to be masters of their own fate. They are fiercely determined to make the decisions about their future, about what happens in their region, and to have a voice in world affairs, to have a hand on the steering wheel of this planet. I think this is going to happen. I think this is the way to the future. I do not think we even ought to try to make sure that it is done on an American model. It certainly will not be done on the Communist model; it will be done on some model that is peculiarly their own. And in that case I think that it should be done with our sympathy and understanding rather than over our dead bodies.

Now let me say, in my judgment, that almost everything that is going to happen in international politics in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East for as long as anyone in this room is still on this planet will revolve around these nationalisms. The implications are profound and pervasive.

As an illustration, Dean Rusk and Lyndon Johnson turned Vietnam into an American war, made it an American war by bombing North Vietnam and sending American troops because they felt that it was a domino, that is, that all these countries of Southeast Asia were vulnerable to native guerrilla Communist movements. Of course, they are all vulnerable to an invasion by China, but that is not what was meant by dominoes. They meant that they were vulnerable to an internal, domestic, native guerrilla Communist movement. In the 1940s and the early 1950s they were new governments, newly emerging from colonialism, weak in experience. But believe me, they are no longer. This was unfortunately a lag. They ceased to be dominoes. Now we may create dominoes by our invasions of places like Cambodia, but there are no dominoes in Southeast Asia if left to themselves. Indonesia, for instance, had the largest Communist party of any country outside the Communist world in 1965—two million members. The Communists were so ill-advised as to attempt a coup d'état. The Moslem peasants and the soldiers in the army rose up and killed, according to official CIA sources, over 300,000 members of the Communist party within a matter of a few weeks. The Australians that I've talked to who were there at the time say that it is really a much higher figure. They estimate nearly a million. The point is that it took no American soldiers to do this, and the reason was that the Indonesian peasant had identified communism with a foreign power, i.e., with China, and it was the foreigners they were fighting against.

We have discussed the emerging nationalisms, and I think this is the key to Vietnam. Many of us thought that Vietnam was a simple Communist aggression. Certainly Lyndon Johnson did and Dean Rusk did. Well, it was a Communist aggression. The north armed guerrillas and trained them. They were directed by Hanoi. But it was considerably more than simple Communist aggression. It was, in fact, an anticolonial movement feeding on social discontent, the need for land reform, feeding on frustrated nationalism, whose leaders by an accident of history were Communists. The accident of history is that the French, in what was probably the most monumental stupidity in post-World War II times, attempted to reimpose colonialism when any high school kid knew that colonialism was dead. As a consequence, the

peasants of Vietnam looked around for an independent party, a political party that would fight the French, and it happened that the only party around was the Communist. We are seeing here what I think is a unique phenomena, that is, the last Asian nation in which communism captured the leadership of nationalism.

Against this background, if we are not fighting communism in Vietnam, but rather nationalism, then it is understandable why military force is not really effective. We have bombed North and South Vietnam since 1965 and we have dumped more bombs on North and South Vietnam than were dumped on both Japan and Germany throughout World War II. It hurt the North Vietnamese a great deal, but it was not decisive; it did not end the war. We also sent in 500,000 American troops to supplement approximately a million South Vietnamese troops. The military side in a very narrow military sense has been a great success. The American soldiers there have performed superbly and bravely. They have been well led by their officers. The logistics have probably been the most magnificent and efficient in the history of the world. In narrow military terms it has been a victory. For every American or South Vietnamese killed there have been somewhere between five and ten North Vietnamese Viet Cong killed.

All this, however, happens to be irrelevant. The authority I like to quote at this point is one of our greatest soldier-statesmen, General Matthew Ridgeway, who opposed the American intervention in 1964 in Vietnam and has opposed it ever since. He quite correctly said that it would not work, that we were using military force for a goal to which military force was not suited—that of changing people's minds, of destroying communism as a political force in South Vietnam. And as General Ridgeway said, you can destroy people, you can kill all the Vietnamese in the world, but you cannot change their minds with military force. To do that, you would have to kill every eighteen-year-old class for eighteen years. It just would not work for this particular goal.

If you want a vivid illustration, ask yourself this: We have had some troubles in this country—the riots in Watts, the riots of Chicago, the notorious riot at Columbia University a few years ago. What if the President of the United States went to the Prime Minister of Germany or the Prime

Minister of Japan and said, send 500,000 German troops or Japanese troops over here to put down the riots in our cities. I would suspect that hawks, doves, Democrats, Republicans, blacks, whites, every faction of society would take to the streets to fight the foreigner. When a Vietnamese peasant looks at black and white American faces and also sees his village bombed or shelled, what does he think? These people get hurt in wars. Generally speaking, what he seems to think is that the Communist side must be right. The Americans must be trying to reimpose colonialism. So for every Viet Cong you kill, you recruit two or three for the Viet Cong. The CIA tells me, as of last week, that the political organization, the political infra-structure of the Communists is intact in the villages of South Vietnam. We have broken up the main force units, but the political structure is intact. This means that the structure for recruiting, organizing, and training is there.

Against this background, Mr. Nixon's policy of Vietnamization is a vast improvement over Lyndon Johnson's policy of escalation, but it does not go far enough. It is not a decision to end the war; it is a decision to continue the war with Vietnamese ground forces and American air forces. This means that the time will be stretched out in which something can go wrong that might bring Communist China in. It means that five hundred or so Americans who are prisoners in North Vietnam will spend the rest of their lives in a Communist prison camp. They will never be released so long as there are American troops in South Vietnam. The only way to get them out is through a negotiated settlement. I think it commits us and puts the great United States in the pocket of two comic opera generals—Thieu and Ky. The great United States becomes the puppet of two people who do not even have the support of their own people, who are supported by no more than about ten percent—landlords and Catholics, but not the Buddhists nor the bulk of the population.

Such a policy neglects the true American interest, which is not whether South Vietnam is governed by a Communist government or by a coalition government that includes the Communists. We have certainly tolerated a country of similar size ninety miles from our coast, and it hasn't noticeably hurt the United States. I'm thinking of Cuba. What does

affect the American interest is the whole of Southeast Asia. American interests would be served by a neutralized, stabilized, Southeast Asia. It happens that we can get this. The Communist side in Paris is offering this for cold-blooded, realistic reasons. Because of the Sino-Soviet dispute, North Vietnam and the Soviet Union are frightened of a Southeast Asia dominated by Communist China. It happens that cold-bloodedly, hardheadedly, realistically, not through any sentiment, the Soviets and Hanoi would like to see a negotiated, neutralized, Southeast Asia. We can't hope to make Southeast Asia a bastion of anticommunism. It would cost millions of American lives because we would have to fight the Chinese. What we can hope for is a neutralized Southeast Asia. It is in our interest that Southeast Asia not be dominated by Communist China. There are here the elements of a deal. The North Vietnamese have told Averell Harriman at Paris that they are frightened, they want to make a deal, they want to exchange ambassadors with the western countries. They say, look, we fought the French, not just for ten years, we fought them for ninety years; but now we have friendly relations with the French. We are not doing this out of sentimental reasons, but because we need somebody to balance the Chinese. We would like to have friendly relations with the United States.

Let me say in the end that I think that Mr. Nixon is making a mistake in not permitting our ambassador to negotiate this deal that is being offered. I think that not because I trust the Communists. I don't trust them for a moment. But you can trust their self-interests. You can trust the political pressures working on them even if you cannot trust them. So I say that Nixon has not gone far enough because he is refusing, turning his back on, a settlement that would be in the American interest.