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U.S. Foreign Policy - Present and Future

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UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY
Present and Future

Through a decade of war and postwar adjustment we have faced a continuous series of international challenges. We have met the challenges, not so well perhaps, as the perfectionists demanded, but not so badly either, as our enemies desired.

Some believe there are easier roads to peace and stability than acceptance of international responsibilities. The advocates of ostrich-isolationism are still with us. So too are the hotheads of preventive war. The vast majority, however, have rejected these approaches for what they are -- panaceas -- easy to swallow but deadly in their effect on our future.

It has not always been easy to resist glib solutions. We have been severely tried in the flaming crucible of the Korean conflict. We have been tried, too, in our hearts and in our heads, by the systematic provocations of the Soviet Union which have built up in us, periodically, almost intolerable pressures to retreat in confusion into hemispheric isolationism or to strike out blindly in preventive war like a goaded bull at a tormentor. It is a tribute to the inner fortitude and the common sense of the nation that we have refused to accept either of these futilities.

Will we continue to meet the test now that there are signs that the Communists intend to ease the pressure? Will the temptation to relax prove too great -- to all of us? Will we pause to speculate idly on whether peace or war lies behind the enigmatic scowl that has replaced the enigmatic smile in the innermost recesses of the Kremlin?

If we do, we may get a respite from responsibility and even from taxes, but for how long? One year? Two years? Five, perhaps.

The world will not stand still while we are on a national vacation. Aggressive totalitarianism once again will begin to expand. The area in which freedom has an opportunity to live, to work, and to grow will shrink steadily. Once again we will face the necessity of risking all in a great conflict to save liberty from total extinction.

The fundamental issue of United States foreign policy for the present and future, then, is simply this: Will we continue to work with other nations for international stability and peaceful progress or will we abandon our efforts on the verge of their fruition? At stake in the decision are not only our lives but the lives of our children and our children's children.

We will choose, I am confident, to build and not to abandon.

This course means a reorganization in the conduct of our international relations. Control over foreign policy must be concentrated in the hands of the President and the Secretary of State so that the sprawling agencies overseas can be curbed and reduced, so that America can speak abroad with a single voice. As a first step, MSA should be dissolved and its functions transferred to the Department of State.

Abroad, our foreign policy has already produced a phalanx of strength in Western Europe. The nations of that area are more stable than at any time since World War II. They have been encouraged by us to move into closer economic and military ties with one another. Their growing armed power, fused with ours in NATO, is a powerful source of security for all of us and the greatest single deterrent to World War III.

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The Soviet Union undoubtedly will continue its efforts to destroy the deepening unity of Western Europe and the North Atlantic Community. We can defeat this attempt if our foreign policy achieves the following results:

First, impels the Western European nations to even greater economic, political and military integration;

Second, finds a rational solution to the underlying economic problems of the dollar shortage so that we can halt give-away aid and at the same time make it unnecessary for the Western Europeans to turn East in order to survive; and

Third, brings Germany and Spain into the Western Alliance.

Germany has moved closer to the western camp. We should consolidate the relationship. We must remove the principal obstacle to consolidation, French fear of German domination. To do so will require a sympathetic understanding of France’s problems elsewhere in the world, in Tunisia, in Morocco and particularly in Indo-China. The French have made enormous sacrifices to help the Indo-Chinese nationalists establish their independence and to hold back the Communist tide from the North. We must recognize that France as a co-defender of Western Europe is inseparable from France as the defender of the gateway to Southeast Asia.

In the Middle East, American foreign policy will meet severe tests. Floating on a sea of petroleum, this region is a target of Moscow. Our aid to Greece and Turkey has prevented an aggressive design from becoming an aggressive act. But this strategic crossroads of three continents, Europe, Asia and Africa, is not yet safe. A solution must be found to the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute and the Suez-Sudan problem. The Arab-Israeli conflict must be resolved in a satisfactory manner. We could then work actively to encourage General Naguib of Egypt to lead the Arab world into a Middle East Command linked with NATO in a continuous defense belt around the perimeter of Western and Southern Europe.

In the Far East, foreign policy must remain flexible to deal with an extremely fluid situation. We should continue to supply aid to Formosa in amounts that the Nationalist Government can use effectively. We must continue to recognize that government.

The Korean negotiations should be continued as long as they are instrumental in bringing about the release of American prisoners of war and as long as the Communists show a willingness to move toward an honorable truce settlement.

Closer to home, the time has come to make up for the neglect of the Good Neighbor Policy toward Latin America. We are happy that the President has taken steps to reaffirm our ties of friendship with the nations to the south and that he is sending his brother as his representative to that part of the hemisphere. There is little time to lose. Signs are multiplying that the Communist infection which has settled into Guatemala may be spreading.

If we can carry through these problems, we will be, with our friends, in a position to defend ourselves in the event of Soviet aggression. On the other hand, if there is a shift to genuine peace in Soviet tactics, we will be in a position to negotiate from strength rather than weakness. Therefore, let there be no appeasement.

If the Soviets really seek peace, they have ample opportunity to prove their intention. The President has just laid down the requirements which will test the Soviet Union’s good faith and we are in accord with his stand.

The President, in his first official foreign-policy moves, has demonstrated a deep awareness of the difficulties that lie ahead. He has had our support so far and he will continue to have it so long as his administration builds toward genuine peace and international progress. We believed in bipartisanship in the past and we believe in it now. In a world balanced on a razor’s edge between peace and war it is all the more important that politics stop at the water’s edge.