

## CHAPTER 7

### *The Shaping of United States Foreign Policy*

Creating a foreign policy for the United States is one of the most difficult tasks which faces any presidential administration. Beginning with President Washington, each Chief Executive has had to meet the dual responsibility of maintaining a foreign policy in keeping with the American ideal as interpreted in his time, while simultaneously placating political opposition within and without his own party. This dual undertaking calls for a constant combination of the proverbial wisdom of Solomon with the patience of Job. With the recrudescence of violent nationalism in every section of the globe and the parallel emergence of a much broader American political leadership, the task has become immeasurably more difficult.

The development of United States foreign policy has taken place within the context of an ideological struggle which has been classified by political scientists as "realism" versus "idealism." Typical of the "idealistic" approach are the following quotations from President Woodrow Wilson and President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In an address delivered in Mobile, Alabama, on October 27, 1913, President Woodrow Wilson declared:

We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us, and that we will never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so.

In his message to Congress on January 6, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt expressed the now-famous concept of the "four freedoms."

We are committed to the proposition that principles of morality—and considerations for our own security—will never permit us to acquiesce in a peace dictated by aggressors and sponsored by appeasers. We know that enduring peace cannot be bought at the cost of other people's freedom . . .

In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon essential human freedoms. The first is freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world

The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way . . . everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want . . . everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear . . . anywhere in the world.

. . . Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights or keep them.

Representative of the viewpoint of political "realism" are the following quotations from Alexander Hamilton and the contemporary political analyst, Hans J. Morgenthau. In his *Pacificus Paper* No. 3, July, 1793, Alexander Hamilton asserted:

Self-preservation is the first duty of a nation . . . . Indeed, the rule of morality in this respect is not precisely the same between nations as between individuals. The duty of making its own welfare the guide of its actions, is much stronger upon the former than upon the latter; in proportion to the greater magnitude and importance of national compared with individual happiness, and to the greater permanency of the effects of national than of individual conduct

Hans J. Morgenthau wrote as follows (see Bibliography):

The fundamental error which has thwarted American foreign policy in thought and action is the antithesis of national interest and moral principles. The equation of political moralism with morality and of political realism with immorality is itself untenable. The choice is not between moral principles and the national interest devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles, divorced from political reality, and another set of moral principles derived from political reality. The basic fact of international politics is the absence of a society able to protect the existence, and to promote the interests, of the individual nations. For the individual nations to take care of their own national interests is, then, a political necessity. There can be no moral duty to neglect them; for as the international society is at present constituted, the consistent neglect of the national interest can only lead to national suicide. Yet it can be shown that there exists even a positive moral duty for the individual nation to take care of its national interests.

Self-preservation for the individual as well as for societies is not only a biological and psychological necessity, but in the absence of an overriding moral obligation a moral duty as well. . . .

It becomes obvious that each of these approaches to making foreign policy is based upon a series of tacit assumptions of its own. It becomes further evident that each of these approaches is laden with its own value-judgments. It is necessary, therefore, to examine both the "realistic" and "idealistic" viewpoints in order to determine their basic soundness. At

the outset it would seem that the "realistic" viewpoint advocates dealing with each issue on its own merits and reaching conclusions on the basis of power politics. The "idealistic" view, on the other hand, seems to imply that some formal moral criterion must be established as an *a priori* basis for policy determination. Thus, the latter brings forth Atlantic Charters while the former shies away from "utopian" manifestoes. The "realist" bases his approach upon the acceptance of a prevailing Hobbesian conflict among nations. Strife rather than harmony is seen as, or taken to be, the general rule in international relations. In the absence of an "over-awing power" the goal of valid diplomacy and statesmanship is a comparatively limited one. It consists of the limitation of struggles and the restriction of their scope. Hence, the emergence of the "containment" policy under the authorship of Mr. Kennan (see Bibliography). Here, as always, the "realist" seeks not the utopian society which he believes can exist only on a blueprint, but rather the means of attaining a balance of power and an adjustment to existing conditions. There is, therefore, within his approach constant emphasis upon checks and balances, compromise, and maintenance of a flexible bargaining position. There is, in addition, frank acknowledgment that in international diplomacy there often exists a discrepancy between means and ends. Above all, there is the recurrent theme that the struggle for power is permanent and ever present and that the best we can do is try to limit the overconcentration of power and relieve the tensions which make for war. Britain, for example, for over one hundred years maintained peace in Europe through a carefully controlled balance of power.

The political "idealist" on the other hand, starts from the assumption that power politics is not only an abnormal but also a passing phase in mankind's history, and that it is essentially a cynical distortion and corruption of history which is particularly out of place in our shrunken globe where the alternative to "one world" is truly no world. It ascribes all great controversies in history to the clash between incompatible ideals and principles rather than an ubiquitous yearning for power. On the level of practical alternatives to power politics the political "idealist" would usually posit one of several alternatives. These include universal world government, the foreswearing of relations with "bad" countries, or some form of neutralism or isolationism.

Political commentators are pretty much in agreement that regardless of whether one is essentially an "idealist" or a "realist" there exists a certain underlying consensus as to the ends and means of American foreign policy.

There is agreement in other words that both schools adhere to a broad policy which includes the following:

1. the containment of the Soviet Union and its outdistancing in the race for competitive coexistence;
2. establishment of a peaceful world order in which American ideological and material interests are secure;
3. the recognition that a reasonable reconciliation of individual freedom and mass welfare is possible.

There is also general agreement that the means toward these ends must not contradict the general rules of what we consider fair play.

The history of United States foreign relations, for reasons discussed below, has often been under the sway of the "idealistic" rather than the "realistic" approach. Thus, for example, we find the refusal to recognize first the Soviet Union and then Red China on the grounds that they are "evil and corrupt powers."

Thus too, so many of our wars are fought to eliminate and extirpate the "infidels and evildoers." When we go into battle, our terms become "unconditional surrender" and our mottoes become "make the world safe for democracy." The implication is that, once evil men are destroyed, evil too will disappear. It is against this background that two classic documents in American history, each of which has become a guiding principle for generations of "idealists," becomes clear.

President George Washington's Farewell Address on September 17, 1796, advised:

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.

. . . Why . . . entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor, or caprice? . . .

It is our policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world.

Thomas Jefferson wrote to President James Monroe on October 24, 1823:

Our first fundamental maxim should be, never to entangle ourselves in the broils of Europe. Our second, never to suffer Europe to intermeddle with cis-Atlantic [on this side of the Atlantic] affairs. America, North and South, has a set of interests distinct from those of Europe, and peculiarly her own. She would therefore have a system of her own, separate and apart from that of Europe.

In the development of foreign policy, a democratic nation faces one of its most striking and difficult dilemmas. The executive position must somehow represent or reflect the consensus of the electorate. But the electorate is often contradictory and moody. Certainly the advantages of a foreign policy, fluid enough to reflect these contradictions, are offset by the disadvantages of the resulting uncertainty. With so many involved in the creation of a foreign policy, and so many more affected by its direction, it is sometimes to be wondered that *any* policy can clearly reflect the "will of the people." And yet, if it is to be truly democratic then somehow it must. Thus, for example, we find emerging within the formation of contemporary United States foreign policy an attempt at eclecticism—a combining of both the "realistic" and "idealistic" approach.

Let us examine two statements which reflect this new approach and then proceed to an analysis of the specific obstacles which stand in the way of its fulfillment. The first of these is from an address to the nation by President Dwight D. Eisenhower which was delivered on April 16, 1953. It reads as follows:

The way chosen by the United States was plainly marked by a few clear precepts, which govern its conduct in world affairs—

First: no people on earth can be held, as a people, to be an enemy, for all humanity shares the common hunger for peace and fellowship and justice

Second: no nation's security and well-being can be lastingly achieved in isolation but only in effective cooperation with fellow nations.

Third: any nation's right to a form of government and an economic system of its own choosing is *inalienable*.

Fourth: any nation's attempt to dictate to other nations their form of government is *indefensible*.

And fifth: a nation's hope of lasting peace cannot be firmly based upon a race in armaments but rather upon just relations and honest understanding with all other nations.

For the second quotation we turn to the words of Mr. George Kennan (see Bibliography):

It is clear that the United States cannot expect in the foreseeable future to enjoy political intimacy with the Soviet regime. It must continue to regard the Soviet Union as a rival, not a partner, in the political arena. It must continue to expect that Soviet policies will reflect no abstract love of peace and stability, no real faith in the possibility of a permanent happy coexistence of the Socialist capitalist worlds, but rather a cautious, persistent pressure toward the disruption and weakening of all rival influence and rival power.

Balanced against this are the facts that Russia, as opposed to the Western world in general, is still by far the weaker party, that Soviet policy is highly

flexible, and that Soviet society may well contain deficiencies which will eventually weaken its own total potential. This would of itself warrant the United States entering with reasonable confidence upon a policy of firm containment, designed to confront the Russians with unalterable counterforce at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.

How then, as a nation are we prepared to meet the demands of such a foreign policy? It is a commonplace among writers on the United States to note that we have taken on very reluctantly the risky role of world leadership. The inevitable remark has also been made that the American rise to the pinnacle has been accompanied by the concomitant rise of a ruthless, amoral, power-hungry Soviet Union. The question therefore naturally arises as to how capable we are of making the necessary decisions which will achieve for us the maximum national security. That these decisions are vital not only to us but to the rest of the world as well is apparent in the relationships between a successful American foreign policy and the well-being, political and economic, of the entire free world. The root of the problem lies in the relationship between the need for incisive and intelligent decision-making on the part an informed leadership and a democratic myth that insists that the people as a whole, in their inherent wisdom, can make the decisions vital to their survival.

Thus we are faced with the question of whether the mass of the American people can judge wisely the complex and often remote problems of contemporary foreign policy. The question is complicated by the traditional pattern of American abstention from foreign "problems" except in periods of great stress. The pattern of American life finds the average American citizen deeply involved in private pursuits. In fact, it is in just this involvement that men like T. V. Smith insist one finds the secret of American freedom. Be that as it may, we nevertheless find that the average American develops views on political matters in a ratio to their direct relationship and effect upon him. As a result, his main interests, politically speaking, lie in such matters as tax laws, social security, and wage and price legislation. It is only on rare occasions that he is aroused to the degree that he forms opinions relative to foreign policy. As a result, we often find a marked instability and a sharp fluctuation characterizing these moods. We come face to face then with the dual problem of how to make the public alert, informed, and active in policy making, and how to make official leadership responsible to the public. No less a problem is posed by the perpetual Executive-Congressional struggle over program direction and leadership which is a normal result of the very structure of our govern-

ment as set up under the Constitution. This struggle has become further complicated over the years by the constant demands of conflicting pressure groups. The average citizen who wants to form an intelligent opinion about foreign policy not only needs to know what the Chief Executive and the Congress are striving to achieve, but also what pressure groups are behind what policy and for what reasons.

We need to take all these points of view into consideration, because we come finally to the realization that as American citizens we are called upon today, perhaps more than ever before in our history, to participate in the making of decisions affecting not only our immediate lives but the fate of Western civilization. Typical of this responsibility is the need for policy formulation in the Middle East.

A reaction to the pressures of world tension resulting from the Middle Eastern crisis was a necessity, but the Eisenhower Doctrine (see Docs. 30-33) certainly was not the only possible reaction to these pressures. Documents 34-36 are examples of alternative American proposals, while Documents 37-43 present Middle Eastern policy statements from other nations.

In the light of the succession of crises following upon the promulgation of the Eisenhower Doctrine, one cannot help but ask whether it served its purpose at all. We need only be reminded that Lebanon alone of the Arab nations requested aid under its terms. The hindsight of the "post mortem" analyst begs the question of what would have been the history of events in the Middle East if a policy other than that which emerged early in 1957 had been in force. In any case, the intervention in Lebanon did occur, as did the re-entry of British troops into Jordan. These are the cold facts. But the big questions remain.

Where would the "idealists" now direct us? What role would the "realists" demand of us? Of what importance and political effect will be the propaganda and votes of the interested pressure groups in this country? Shall we "go it alone" or cast our lot in a policy of collective security? Is our foreign policy as it now stands a valid representation of public opinion? In a world which refuses to remain static, is United States foreign policy flexible enough to cope with emergencies as they arise?

In the American democracy, foreign policy must, in the long run, reflect the viewpoint of the majority. In the words of Paul H. Appleby, "Every expression of opinion on public affairs—in the barber shop or beauty parlor, in a taxicab, at a club meeting, at a party, union meeting, farm organization meeting, or wherever—is a contribution to the climate

of opinion within which the government acts in its constant effort to achieve or maintain consent. Every withholding of expression similarly is a vote.”

To the citizen who wishes to inform himself and to make his opinions felt in the shaping of our Middle Eastern policy this analysis and the collection of documents that follows are respectfully dedicated.