

U.S. Foreign Policy and Asia in the 1970s: From the Nixon Doctrine to the Carter Doctrine¹

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I

When Richard Nixon took office in 1969, it was obvious that the American strategy in Vietnam needed drastic revision in the middle of the Vietnam War. His Administration was committed to formulating a strategy in which the end of American involvement in the foreign tragic event would be possible.

Originally the President enunciated what has become known as the Nixon Doctrine on July 25, 1969, in Guam, when he had an off-the-record press conference on his way to Vietnam.² What he said on that occasion was interpreted as probable withdrawal from Asia. He was asked as follows :

Mr. President, sir, on the question of U.S. military relationships in Asia, if I may ask you a hypothetical question : If a leader of one of the countries with which we have had close military relationships, either through SEATO or in Vietnam, should say, "Well, you are pulling out of Vietnam with your troops, we can read in the newspapers. How can we know that you will remain to play a significant role as you say you wish to do in security arrangements in Asia ?" What kind of an approach can you take to that question ?³

His answer was that countries threatened by aggression from non-nuclear powers should take the "primary responsibility for their own defense."⁴ Anyway the primary purpose of the new doctrine was to limit American military interventions overseas based on his recognition that American

predominance in physical resources and political power did not exist any more. And its immediate purpose was to get out of Indochina. The latter purpose was presented in his November 3, 1969, "Vietnamization" speech, in which he laid down three principles as guidelines for American policy toward Asia :

First, the United States will keep all of its treaty commitments.

Second, we shall provide a shield if a nuclear power threatens the freedom of a nation allied with us or of a nation whose survival we consider vital to our security.

Third, in cases involving other types of aggression, we shall furnish military and economic assistance when requested in accordance with our treaty commitments. But we shall look to the nation directly threatened to assume the responsibility of providing the manpower for its defense.⁵

Thus, Nixon presented a major shift in U.S. foreign policy. The fact is that the Nixon Doctrine was formulated to guide American security policy in Asia for the 1970s and beyond, paving the way for the Vietnam withdrawal syndrome : subsequent military withdrawals from Indochina and Thailand, the scaling down of the Seventh Fleet and force reductions in South Korea under the Nixon Administration and even under the Carter Administration. However, it seemed that among most of the Asian countries which had been enjoying both a military dependence and a psychological support a feeling of unease concerning the direction of American policy in Asia was developed, doubts about credibility of the United States raised. The repercussions of the Vietnam withdrawal syndrome were great not only in Southeast Asia but also in East Asia.

II

It is of significance to try to understand the implications of the Nixon Doctrine to East Asia, where Japan, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union, and the United States intersect. As Marshall Green, Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, once said in his speech in early 1971 that the Nixon Doctrine was the key aspect of United States foreign policy then, "especially toward East Asia."⁶ He went on to say : "Basically, this doctrine as applied to East Asia sets a state of mind, a style of

diplomacy, a way of conducting our programs abroad, which reduces our direct responsibility and calls upon the nations of the area, individually and collectively, to assume an increasing role in providing for their own internal defense.”⁷ On March 15, 1978, testifying in the hearings for the investigation of Korean-American relations, Green said that “our policies in East Asia were, during this period, 1969 to 1972, largely related to the Nixon Doctrine, which included . . . the lowering of our ground force posture, generally speaking, in East Asia, while retaining an overall strong military position.”⁸ Marsahll Green, before visiting East Asia when he was named Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, had an opportunity to meet President Nixon and showed him a piece of paper he had drawn up “which expressed what I regarded to be his views.”⁹ Among the key points in this paper, which the President read and approved, was the statement that :

The United States has vital interests in East Asia as well as specific commitments ; the United States will honor its defense commitments, all of which were formally approved by the U.S. Senate.

While U.S. interests remain essentially the same and the commitments immutable, there is undeniably a change in mood in the American people. They will be cautious about undertaking new commitments. They are becoming somewhat impatient with carrying what many consider to be a disproportionate share of the burden of military security and economic assistance in areas which, while important to the United States, are nevertheless distant. They are asking more and more frequently what other countries are doing to help themselves and each other to share these burdens. The attitude of the American people and the capacity of the new administration to cooperate further in Asia will thus depend to an important extent upon what the countries of the area are prepared to do for themselves and for each other. It is most improbable, for example, that the United States would have been able to contribute as much as it has promised to do for the support of Indonesia in 1968 and 1969 had it not been for the fact that Japan was willing to put up an equal amount and that other countries also contributed.¹⁰

When President Nixon held a press conference in Guam, it is guessed with certainty that he had Green’s paper in mind.

To be sure, recognizing the fact that “whether we like it or not, geography makes us a Pacific power,”¹¹ what the Nixon Doctrine sought was to establish a sound basis upon which the United States could continue to

carry out an important role as a Pacific power in a manner in accordance with Asia's own aspirations and which could make it possible to get the essential support of the American people, asking Asian countries, allies and friends—particularly Japan—to share burdens and responsibilities with the U.S. The objective of the Nixon Doctrine was to insure national security of the United States and that of its allies and friends “while at the same time permitting the reduction of U.S. forces abroad and reducing the likelihood of having to commit combat ground forces in the future.”¹² This, of course, means that Asian allies and friends should assume a larger share of the burden of their own defense.

More important, the Nixon Doctrine relates not only to military burden-sharing but also to economic and political programs.¹³ The United States, under the Nixon Doctrine, looked forward to Japan's playing an important and large role in carrying out economic and political programs in cooperation with it and in shouldering a larger share of the military burden.¹⁴ The U.S. relationship with Japan, it is safe to say, was thought basic to the success of U.S. policy of seeking stability and peace in East Asia. In his foreign policy report to the Congress on February 18, 1970, President Nixon stated that Japan “has recovered their economic strength, their political vitality, and their national self-confidence,”¹⁵ and went on to state that Japan is “in a position to shoulder larger responsibilities for the peaceful progress” of Asia¹⁶ and that Japan has “a unique and essential role to play in the development of the new Asia.”¹⁷ And finally Nixon said: “our cooperation with Japan will be crucial to our efforts to help other Asian nations develop in peace. Japan's partnership with us will be a key to the success of the Nixon Doctrine in Asia.”¹⁸

Much emphasis was placed on the need particularly for Japan to carry more of the burden of economic assistance to the developing countries of East Asia. The Executive expected Japan to work for economic programs, increasing phenomenally their aid to the developing nations, as a government official was satisfied with Japanese official development aid by illustrating the statistics :

Western Europe, Australia, Japan, and others have stepped up their aid to the developing nations. In 1969, official development aid from Japan rose 22 percent over the previous year to a level of \$437 million. If export credits and

private flows are included, the total reaches \$1.2 billion, or about three-quarters of 1 percent of Japan's GNP. The Japanese Government has pledged to raise this to 1 percent of GNP by 1975. Given Japan's growth rate, this would involve a threefold increase in economic aid within the next 4 years. This is very much in line with the principles of the Nixon Doctrine.¹⁹

The Nixon Doctrine is safely said to be a policy based on regionalism in U.S. foreign policy, which is based on the judgment that the United States would no longer be the dominant power in an alliance system, but rather a "first among equals." General explanation is that regionalism is not a return to a strategy of isolationism or Fortress America, because the United States would remain a world power and would continue to support two centers of strength—in Europe and in Northeast Asia, though of a different nature. Deterrence would still insure the survival of the United States and its allies. In Europe and Asia, the allies would be expected to shoulder a greater share of the defense burden. In Asia, it would mean that Japan would be required to increase its defense forces to enable it to assist the United States in patrolling the sea lines of communications from Japan's territorial waters to the Straits of Malacca. On the other hand, the United States would also develop an effective power projection force capable of rapidly exerting U.S. military influence around the globe.²⁰

Anyhow, the overall impression about the Nixon Doctrine was that the United States was prepared to withdraw from Asia. The process of the tragic end of the Vietnam War revealed to the world a conspicuous symptom of the Vietnam withdrawal syndrome.

III

The Paris accords of January 27, 1973, on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam did not bring American involvement in Vietnam as well as the war itself to a peaceful end. From 1973 to 1975 the Congress, reflecting disillusionment with the prolonged experience abroad of the American people and loss of support for the military involvement in Vietnam among the people, stubbornly restricted Nixon's and Ford's capacity to involve the United States in the war effectively and significantly enough to materialize honored disengagement, for example, by the legisla-

tion of the War Powers Act, and the Congress relentlessly turned its back to aid requests to South Vietnam by the Executive.

The end of the Vietnam War was sudden and tragic. U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin flew away from the roof of the U.S. embassy in Saigon at the dawn of April 30, 1975. And Central Saigon was completely placed under the control of North Vietnam.²¹ President Ford in April 1975 asked the Congress for emergency funds for the South Vietnam Government and, when these were refused, he decided to put the war behind him. "Today America can regain the sense of pride that existed before Vietnam," he declared at a Tulane University convocation, "But it cannot be achieved by refighting a war that is finished as far as America is concerned. . . . We, of course, are saddened indeed by the events in Indochina. But these events, tragic as they are, portend neither the end of the world nor of America's leadership in the world."²² And he went on to say that "the time has come to look forward to an agenda for the future, to unify, to bind up the Nation's wounds, and to restore its health and its optimistic self-confidence. . . . It is in this spirit that we must now move beyond the discords of the past decade. It is in this spirit that I ask you to join me in writing an agenda for the future."²³

Faced with the worsened situations in South Vietnam, President Ford said to the world :

I must say with all of the certainty of which I am capable : No adversary or potential enemies of the United States of America should imagine that America can be safely challenged, and no allies or time-tested friends of the United States should worry or fear that our commitments to them will not be honored. The unfortunate confusion and changing situation in Southeast Asia should not give encouragement to our adversaries nor apprehension to our friends. We stand ready to defend ourselves and support our allies as surely as we always have.²⁴

The credibility of the United States, our credibility throughout the world, both among our allies and our adversaries, depends upon their assessment of our moral, economic, and military strength and staying power. All of these elements are extremely essential.²⁵

On April 29, approximately 1,000 American and 5,500 Vietnamese personnel were removed from the Saigon area. This evacuation, President

Ford said, closed “a chapter in the American experience.”²⁶ “The ignominious escape of the Americans and a few lucky Vietnamese from the roof of the embassy into helicopters,” in the words of Ronald Steel, “symbolized our failure.”²⁷

In a tragic and humiliating way, Americans finally left Vietnam, and hoped to put the Vietnam experience out of mind. In the late 1970s, Mike Mansfield told an English radio audience :

It seems to me the American people want to forget Vietnam and not even remember that it happened. But the cost was 55,000 dead, 303,000 wounded, \$150 billion. With some of us it will never be forgotten because it was one of the most tragic, if not the most tragic, episodes in American history. It was unnecessary, uncalled for, it wasn't tied to our security or a vital interest. It was just a misadventure in a part of the world which we should have kept our nose out of.²⁸

As a matter of fact, when the United States began to involve itself to the Vietnam conflict to prevent apparently Soviet-directed Communism from marching across Asia and “enlarged its commitment to halt a presumably expansionist Communist China, and eventually made Vietnam a test of its determination to uphold order,”²⁹ it was just in the heyday of world predominance which made it possible for President John F. Kennedy to state with confidence that “we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty”³⁰ and that “We in this country, in this generation, are —by destiny rather than choice—the watchmen on the walls of world freedom.”³¹ However, Vietnam made clear “the inherent unworkability of a policy of global containment,”³² and Vietnam made it clear that America’s “power, however great, had limits”³³ in an age in which it was too dangerous for the United States to use its military power to achieve its stated objectives because both the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China have significantly and phenomenally developed their military capabilities. To be sure, the end of the Vietnam experience is defined as a logical consequence of American post-World War II containment.

IV

In the wake of the catastrophic fall-out from Vietnam, the United States kept on conducting foreign and defense policies in the form of the Nixon Doctrine. President Gerald Ford promulgated a “new Pacific Doctrine” in Honolulu, Hawaii, on December 7, 1975, declaring that the stability of the world and the security of the United States “depend upon our Asian commitments.”³⁴ He listed six fundamental premises. They are :

1. that American strength is basic to any stable balance of power in the Pacific ;
2. that partnership with Japan is a pillar of our strategy ;
3. the normalization of relations with the PRC ;
4. our continuing stake in the stability and security of Southeast Asia ;
5. that our belief that peace in Asia depends upon a resolution of outstanding political conflicts ;
6. that peace in Asia requires a structure of economic cooperation reflecting the aspirations of all the peoples in the region.³⁵

This is the very first comprehensive outline of White House policy toward the Asian-Pacific region since the collapse of the American venture in Indochina, but this doctrine is nothing but a restatement of the Nixon Doctrine. Ford tried in his doctrine to forestall a swing in the United States toward isolationism and withdrawal from Asia following the defeat in Indochina in order to show a positive stance for countering gradual Soviet expansion in Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with Japan and the People’s Republic of China.

Tension in Indochina after the collapse of Saigon was in the favor of the Soviet Union because of its possible access to Vietnam. In fact, gradual and steady progress in the relations between Vietnam and the Soviet Union in the end bore fruits of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries in November 1978. Thus the Soviet Union has made the conclusion of the treaty the restarting of a major expansion in the military presence—naval presence—in Southeast Asia by its free access to and use of Cam Ranh Bay. Thus the Soviet Union has enjoyed the fruits of strategic importance in Southeast Asia after the U.S. retreat from Indochina, mainly

because Vietnam has provided the Soviet Union with capabilities to influence the safety of the vital sea and air lines of communications of the Western Pacific. It seems to this writer that Ford's doctrine was to a great extent accepted as a premonitory sign of encircling the Soviet Union by forming a regional anti-Soviet configuration, composed of the United States, the PRC, and Japan, in the Asian-Pacific region.

V

It is probably safe to say that under the Nixon Doctrine two aspects concerning Asia were thought to be significant: the important economic and political role-playing by Japan and the normalization with the PRC. During most of the days of the Nixon Presidency, the U.S. Government kept paying much more attention to the realization of rapprochement with the PRC. Two "Nixon shocks" to Japan—President Nixon's announcement of his visit to China on July 15, 1971, his "New Economic Policy" statement on August 15, 1971, in which a 10 percent import surcharge was included and which restricted the dollar's convertibility to gold—and American Government's attitude toward United Nations membership for the PRC—gave most of the Japanese people an impression that "Except for economic conflicts, Nixon and Kissinger did not attach a high priority to U.S.-Japan relations in the context of global balance-of-power politics,"³⁶ though the President reaffirmed how overridingly important the U.S.-Japan alliance was in his annual foreign policy report as follows:

Japan is our most important ally in Asia. It is our second greatest trading partner. It is an essential participant, if a stable world peace is to be built. Our security, our prosperity, and our global policies are therefore intimately and inextricably linked to the U.S.-Japanese relationship. The well-being of both countries requires cooperation and a shared commitment to the same fundamental goals.³⁷

Once Edwin O. Reischauer, former U. S. ambassador to Japan, critically commented:

The Japanese Government was humiliated, and the Japanese as a whole were deeply disturbed to see that the United States could be so unmindful of the Japanese on an issue of such critical importance to them. It was a clear signal

that the United States either did not regard its relations with Japan as very important or else did not have the ability or possibly even the intention, to treat Japan as an equal. Beyond that the United States seemed very unpredictable and therefore unreliable. Japanese confidence in the reliability of the American defense commitment and Japanese hopes that the United States could learn to treat Japan as a full equal were both seriously damaged.³⁸

More emphasis by the United States on progress in Washington-Beijing rapprochement, to be sure, caused Japan to distrust U.S. diplomatic leadership and policy credibility. As a result, Japan “gradually assumed an assertive diplomatic approach, especially in regard to China, and showed a sign of resistance in accommodating the U.S. influence in diplomatic, economic, and security matters.”³⁹

It did not take long for Japan to overcome the first one of the Nixon shocks. Fortunately the shock provided Tokyo with an opportunity to seek diplomatic normalization with Beijing. Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, who took office in July 1972, was courageous and positive enough to conduct independent diplomacy and to embark on the normalizing of relations with Beijing. Tanaka visited Beijing toward the end of September 1972. The political leaders of the two countries reached an agreement to end the abnormal state of affairs between them and to establish diplomatic relations. And in accordance with the Tanaka-Chou joint statement on September 29, Japan and the PRC exchanged their first ambassadors—Heishiro Ogawa and Chen Chu, and both countries went as far as to start negotiations on civil aviation, navigation, trade, and fisheries.

In the end the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between Japan and the People’s Republic of China was signed on August 12, 1978. And four and a half months later, on January 1, 1979, full diplomatic relations between the United States and the PRC were established, which brought to an end about a decade of the process of normalization started soon after President Richard Nixon took office in early 1969.

“For the first time in decades,” Zbigniew Brzezinski accurately noted at the Department of State briefing on China on January 15, 1979, “we can enjoy simultaneously good relations with both China and Japan.”⁴⁰ As early as June 1978, Richard C. Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, evaluated the triangular relations with these words :

From the standpoint of security, the strategic balance that exists today among the four most powerful countries in the region (East Asia) —China, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States—is clearly in our nation’s interests. Although important differences remain with Peking, it is fair to say that the United States, China, and Japan share an interest in maintaining that stability—a significant and hopeful change from the pattern of the past half century in which U.S. Far Eastern policy constantly required us to choose, in effect, between China and Japan. This situation, true only since Henry Kissinger’s 1971 trip to Peking, has created dramatic new opportunities throughout Asia. It is one of our main tasks not to lose these opportunities—which are diplomatic, strategic, political, and economic—through inattention, inaction, or misunderstanding.⁴¹

This improved trilateral relations diplomatically formed through apparently identical interests between the three countries in regard to the Soviet Union, however, did not promise and have not promised peace and stability in the world as well as in the Asian-Pacific region. Almost throughout the 1970s, taking advantage of the American retreat from Asia, détente, and the Vietnam syndrome shared by most of the American people including intellectuals and politicians of reluctance to shoulder the burdens or accept the risks, the Soviet Union kept on spreading its influence much of the rest of the world—in Africa, in the Middle East, in Southwest Asia, and in the Western Pacific.

Anyhow, American efforts to ease the tensions with the PRC, with the Soviet Union in mind, were thought particularly under the Nixon Administration to be inevitable to bring the war in Vietnam to an end and to successfully and fruitfully carry out the programs designed under the Nixon Doctrine such as U.S. force reductions from South Korea. Such conduct of American foreign policy, of which the Japanese Government was quick and active enough to take advantage, was in the end a plus to Japan. At the same time Japan was forced to learn an important lesson from the shock experience: Japan “needed to reduce, if not eliminate, the remaining U.S. patronage in Japanese diplomacy” and in security without “weakening Japan’s vital security linkage” with the superpower on the other side of the Pacific.⁴²

VI

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger warned as early as November 1975 the Soviet Union to cease intervention in Angola, saying that “we cannot ignore the substantial Soviet buildup of weapons in Angola, which has introduced great power rivalry into Africa for the first time in 15 years.”⁴³ Some were cautious about the Soviet interventionist activities, but most were inattentive to them. The Vietnam syndrome indeed powerfully operated in the case of the Angola debate of 1975, with the fall of Saigon a fresh memory.

President Jimmy Carter himself tried to approach the Soviet Union under the influence of the Vietnam syndrome. He stated in his Notre Dame speech on May 22, 1977, that :⁴⁴

For many years, we've been willing to adopt the flawed and erroneous principles and tactics of our adversaries, sometimes abandoning our own values for theirs. We've fought fire with fire, never thinking that fire is better quenched with water. This approach failed, with Vietnam the best example of its intellectual and moral poverty. But through failure we have now found our way back to our own principles and values, and we have regained our lost confidence.

Our policy during this period [since 1945] was guided by . . . a belief that Soviet expansion was almost inevitable but that it must be contained. . . . The unifying threat of conflict with the Soviet Union has become less intensive.

We are now free of that inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear. I'm glad that that's being changed.

Prior to Carter's “free of that inordinate fear of communism” speech, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, for instance, concluded his Fiscal Year 1978 Defense Report on January 17, 1977, with these words: “It should now be evident that the Soviets have taken the initiative in a wide range of programs, that restraint on our part—for whatever reason—has not been reciprocated.”⁴⁵

Even though President Carter gradually began to change his way of thinking about the Soviet Union, paying much attention to the realities

caused by it, as is shown in his speeches at Wake Forest University on March 17, 1978, and at the Naval Academy at Annapolis on June 7, 1978, he was not completely free of the Vietnam legacy.⁴⁶ The realities are that since around the middle of the 1970s when the United States was doomed to the fall of Saigon, the Soviet Union has begun to involve itself in interventionist ventures in Angola, Ethiopia, Zaire, South and North Yemen, and Afghanistan. Appearing before the House of Representatives on the SALT II Treaty, Henry Kissinger testified on July 31, 1979, that "Whatever the cause, the fact is that since 1975 there has been an unprecedented Soviet assault on the international equilibrium."⁴⁷ Presenting some examples including Iran and terrorist activities of this "unprecedented assault," Kissinger assured the Congressmen that :

They are not, to be sure, all controlled by Moscow; but someone who has started a rockslide cannot avoid responsibility by claiming that the rock he threw was not the one that ultimately killed bystanders. Those tactics, reinforced by a Soviet military buildup clearly threatening the strategic, theater, and conventional balances, are incompatible with any notion of détente or coexistence.⁴⁸

Kissinger articulated the definition of an effective foreign policy with restoration of military strength in mind: "Somewhere, somehow, the United States must show that it is capable of rewarding a friend or penalizing an opponent. It must be made clear, after too long an interval, that our allies benefit from association with us and our enemies suffer."⁴⁹

VII

President Carter could recover from the Vietnam syndrome, when Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in large numbers on December 24, 1979. In the face of this invasion, Carter confessed in an interview with ABC-TV on December 31 that by the Soviet invasion "my opinion of the Russians has changed more drastically in the last week than even the previous two and a half years."⁵⁰

In the interview with *The Wall Street Journal*, Zbigniew Brzezinski suggested that the United States should contain the Soviet Union. He said :

The situation that the Soviet Union has produced, whatever its motivations,

therefore has widespread strategic significance. The threat in many respects is reminiscent of the threat in 1947 posed by the Soviet Union to Greece and Turkey which President Truman had to conduct.⁵¹

The Carter Administration produced the so-called "Carter Doctrine" to contain the Soviet Union in Southwest Asia reminiscent of the Cold War of the late 1940s and the 1950s rather than the détente efforts of the 1970s. Describing the Soviet intervention as "the most serious threat to the peace since the Second War,"⁵² the President, in his State of the Union message on January 23, 1980, stated: "Any attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force,"⁵³ though he apparently knew that the United States alone could not defend the vital Persian Gulf because of a decline of national will and might. And to implement the doctrine, Carter produced plans for the "Rapid Deployment Force" "to deploy U.S. military forces rapidly to distant areas."⁵⁴ He finally responded to Soviet expansionism, but his response appeared to be too late. Despite his initiation of the new policy to contain the Soviet Union in Southwest Asia, Carter had to leave the White House. On November 4, 1980, Ronald Reagan got a landslide victory for the Presidency.

VIII

It is often said that the Committee on the Present Danger, New Right organization, played a very crucial role in the victory of Ronald Reagan. This committee was organized in March 1976 in opposition to détente and entered upon a campaign for increased military expenditure, the re-adoption of containment of Soviet expansionism, the exclusion of the Vietnam syndrome. Renewed fears for American security because of apparent aggressiveness of the Soviet Union gradually drove the Vietnam syndrome out of American politics and the public mentality.⁵⁵

President Reagan was asked in his first news conference on January 29, 1981, concerning the goals of the Soviet Union:

Mr. President, what do you see as the long range intentions of the Soviet Union? Do you think, for instance, the Kremlin is bent on world domination

that might lead to a continuation of the cold war, or do you think that under other circumstances détente is possible ?⁵⁶

He gave the following answer :

Well, so far détente's been a one-way street that the Soviet Union has used to pursue its own aims. . . . I don't have to think of an answer as to what I think their intention is ; they have repeated it. I know of no leader of the Soviet Union since the revolution, and including the present leadership, that has not more than once repeated in the various Communist congresses they hold their determination that their goal must be the promotion of world revolution and a one-world Socialist or Communist state, whichever word you want to use.

Now, as long as they do that and as long as they, at the same time, have openly and publicly declared that the only morality they recognize is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat, in order to attain that, and that is moral, not immoral and we operate on a different set of standards, I think when you do business with them, even at a détente, you keep that in mind.⁵⁷

On a different occasion, President Reagan said that "my duty as President requires that I recommend increases in defense spending over the coming years. I know that you're all aware—but I think it bears saying again—that since 1970 the Soviet Union has invested \$300 billion more in its military forces than we have. As a result of its massive military buildup, the Soviets have made a significant numerical advantage in strategic nuclear delivery systems, tactical aircraft, submarines, artillery, and anti-aircraft defense. To allow this imbalance to continue is a threat to our national security."⁵⁸ President Reagan has really begun to embark on a project of reconstructing a strong America with a view to countering the Soviet threat and containing Soviet expansionism. This writer is easy to remember part of the conclusion of NSC-68 forwarded to President Harry Truman on April 7, 1950. It reads :⁵⁹

We must, by means of a rapid and sustained buildup of the political, economic, and military strength of the free world, and by means of an affirmative program intended to wrest the initiative from the Soviet Union, confront it with convincing evidence of the determination and ability of the free world to frustrate the Kremlin design of a world dominated by its will. Such evidence is the only means short of war which eventually may force the Kremlin to abandon its present course of action and to negotiate acceptable agreements on

issues of major importance.

And then the last part of the conclusion comes :

The whole success of the proposed program hangs ultimately on recognition by this Government, the American people, and all free peoples, that the cold war is in fact a real war in which the survival of the free world is at stake. Essential prerequisites to success are consultations with Congressional leaders designed to make the program the object of non-partisan legislative support, and a representation to the public of a full explanation of the facts and implications of the present international situation. The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained.

The most important aspect of NSC-68 is that it was intended to recommend the Government to cope effectively with the Soviet Union with an atomic capability "by mobilizing the moral and material strength of the West while working to alter the Soviet concept of international relations as a prerequisite for negotiations."⁶⁰

Richard Pipes, one of advocates of the containment policy and former director for East European and Soviet Affairs at the National Security Council, outlining the economic, political, and imperial crises that are causing increasing contradictions in Soviet society, advocated increased Western pressures on Moscow in his speech in Paris in October 1982. The Soviet Government, according to his thesis, has traditionally tended to show great prudence in imperialist enterprises out of fears that any humiliation of its forces at the hands of foreign powers could raise doubts in the minds of the Soviets whether it is as omnipotent as it claims to be. A decade or so ago, however, the Soviet Union discarded this cautious attitude. The American failure in Vietnam and the emergence of the Vietnam syndrome appeared to offer the Soviet Union unique opportunities to acquire, at low risk, strategic footholds far away from the Soviet homeland. Taking advantage of the retreat of the United States, the Soviet Union began to enter upon a global imperialist adventure unprecedented in Russian history, assisting military operations on four continents and in Afghanistan. The United States has to tend to look deeper to the root causes of the Soviet menace which lie in the system per se and which are not likely to be altered

until this system undergoes fundamental evolution from within. He goes on to say that : “no responsible persons can have any illusions that it is in the power of the West to alter the Soviet system or to ‘bring the Soviet economy to its knees.’ These are spurious objectives. What one can and ought to strive for is compelling the Soviet regime to bear the consequences of its own priorities. We should not make it easier for the *nomenklatura* to have its cake and eat it : to maintain an inefficient system, the failures of which threaten the power and even the stability of the regime and, at the same time, build up an aggressive military force and expand globally.”⁶¹ He recommends that the West in cooperation with the United States should put much pressure on the Soviet economy so as to make Soviet internal reform impossible and the Soviet Union recognize the need for global retrenchment. His reasoning is, it seems, a reflection of the current climate of opinion concerning how to counter the Soviet aggressiveness directed toward the West.

As a matter of fact, global containment has made a comeback as the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy at the onset of the 1980s after what has been called the “decade of neglect” and the “decade of retreat.” However, it is of necessity to listen to opposite arguments. It is true that the United States is still asked what to do in order to globally contain Soviet expansionism, but it is also necessary to argue with such a realistic recognition of the limits of American power as a whole, as stated, for example, by Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger on November 28, 1984, and Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan in early September 1982 with these words :

Recent history has proven that we cannot assume unilaterally the role of the world’s defender. We have learned that there are limits to how much of our spirit and blood and treasure we can afford to forfeit in meeting our responsibility to keep peace and freedom. . . . We should only engage our troops if we must so as a matter of our *own* vital interest. We cannot assume for other sovereign nations the responsibility to defend *their* territory . . . when our own freedom is not threatened. (Weinberger)⁶²

Other nations have to realize that even the United States has its limitations. We cannot do everything. We cannot be the defender of the Western world, as we know we are, and have high defense expenditures and at the same time run the domestic social programs that we have been running and give as much

financial aid abroad as we have. (Regan)⁶³

Notes

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2. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Richard Nixon, 1969* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1970), p. 544-556.
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