

The Area of Agreement

IN THE SCIENCE OF PHYSICAL MEASUREMENT, MEN LONG since established reliable standards, to facilitate that agreement which is almost impossible on any subject without a common base of reference.

Because of these standards, only a very naive child can now be confused by the ancient catch which asks whether a pound of feathers or a pound of lead is heavier. We learn very early that a pound is a pound and a yard is a yard, no matter what substance is being weighed or measured. Most of us also soon come to realize that our national government maintains a Bureau of Standards, in Washington, to insure that there will be no trifling with measurements that must be standardized as a reliable basis for commercial transactions of every kind.

The maintenance of standards is a proper and indeed an essential function of government. To permit any form of counterfeiting here would quickly create the very chaos in human relations that government is set up to prevent. The verb "counterfeit" simply means "to make against", and nobody is permitted to make dollar bills, or other units of measurement, counter to the standards that the state maintains. The police take care of that.

Unfortunately, it is not so easy to police high government officials when they themselves decide to falsify a

public transaction, or to practice a subtle counterfeiting by the state against the people. Inflation, which is simply governmental depreciation of its own currency, was foreshadowed when the dollar was made inconvertible—when the United States, in effect, abandoned the gold standard. But “men are so simple”, as Machiavelli said, as not to realize that for government to abandon standards, whether physical or moral, is to invite eventual chaos in the area where the deserted standard has heretofore maintained stability and confidence.

There are standards in political as well as in physical science. And, when these political standards have been tested and accepted over a long period, to desert them, even under the plea of national emergency, causes as much confusion as would be the case if the yard were shortened or the pound lessened, as a part of the defense effort. We must take warning from the confusion caused by dollar depreciation, resulting from debasement of a once reliable governmental standard.

The abandonment of its traditional standards by the Department of State is pitifully revealed by the complete instability and apparent opportunism of its foreign policy since the close of World War II. We have swung violently from alliance with Chiang Kai-shek to official denunciation of his regime; from official denunciation of General Franco to the preparation of military alliance with him; from the dismantling of German factories to their re-equipment for war production; from wholesale gifts to Stalin's Russia to embargoes on any trade with Stalin's Russia.

These are only random illustrations of a pervading in-

firmity and uncertainty of purpose which leads many to doubt that the United States, under its present political leadership, is fitted to be what the Department of State grandiloquently calls: "a defensive shield for the free world".¹

The Department of State continuously asserts that its procedures are "democratic". That is nonsense. Everybody knows instinctively what this book has patiently explained: that the daily conduct of foreign policy is necessarily an undemocratic executive function. As Chief Justice Marshall said long since: "The President is the sole organ of the nation in its external relations, and its sole representative with foreign nations." Recognizing this, the American people have always loyally supported foreign policy decisions which they often neither understood nor approved. This support has been rendered because of confidence in the standards of those entrusted with the direction of foreign policy.

Much of that confidence has now been destroyed. And nobody can be expected to give more than grudging support to policies that lose all consistency from one month to the next. For this executive inadequacy the threat from Soviet Russia, while very real, is an ineffective alibi. It was our foreign policy that built that threat to its present magnitude.

Before the present widespread doubt and apprehension in regard to American foreign policy can be removed, standards of honesty and integrity must be re-established by the Executive, or else enforced upon it by Congress.

¹ Dept. of State Publication No. 4236, General Foreign Policy Series 52, p. 1.

2.

REALIZING its extreme unpopularity, Department of State officials, during the Acheson regime, assiduously endeavored to show themselves responsive to public thinking.

Early in 1951 the department published, and distributed widely at the taxpayers' expense, a pamphlet entitled "Our Foreign Policy".² This says: "In recent years the Government has made a prodigious effort to establish closer relations with the people, to develop a two-way traffic of facts and ideas."

The misuse of the word "Government" in this statement is itself revealing. What is meant is the "Administration", which undoubtedly has made a "prodigious effort", by establishing huge and expensive publicity offices, to sell its program to the people. But this is no "two-way traffic". It is a one-way, four-lane highway of Administration propaganda, designed to make the American public believe that whatever the Department of State decides, no matter how wasteful and contradictory, is in the interest of the general welfare.

Although it claims to believe in "two-way traffic" the Department of State does not furnish for domestic information any criticism whatsoever of its shifting policies. Wholly unimportant speeches by minor bureaucrats are reprinted as documentary material in the weekly Department of State Bulletin. Defensive pamphlets, books and

² Publication No. 3972.

reports pour forth from its Division of Publications. Lecturers, editors and correspondents are frequently called together, entertained and "briefed" on what they should say in support of departmental policies. Congressional hearings on the Department's 1952 budget "disclosed that various and sundry employees of the USIE [Voice of America] made a total of 364 speeches and talks in 29 states" between July, 1949, and February, 1951. The House Appropriations Committee commented tartly: "It is difficult to see how this program's primary purpose . . . is benefited by wholesale speech-making to our own people."³

The Department of State, remember, never disseminates in this country any material that is in any way critical of itself. It replies to these criticisms, at public expense, but does not publicize them. To call this procedure a "two-way traffic of facts and ideas" is something less than forthright. And as this technique grew and exfoliated State Department employes began to assume that they really are "the Government", forgetting that in our Republic elected members of the Congressional opposition are just as much a part of "Government" as are appointed officials of the Administration provisionally in power.

Through Congressional control of appropriations, the Department of State was in 1951 forced to backtrack on some of its least defensible practices, and perhaps to acquire some actual respect for those democratic processes to which so much lip service had previously been given.

³ House of Representatives, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, Dept. of State Appropriations Bill, *Committee Print*, pp. 7-8.

The House of Representatives, very properly, took the lead in exerting this "power of the purse".

In hearings before a House Appropriations subcommittee case after case of State Department extravagance was exposed, though none of these was reported by the department's "Office of Public Affairs".

On February 26, 1951, as an illustration, Mr. Ben H. Brown, then "Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations", was asked to explain why "two officers and three clerks" could not handle all the work for which his particular section wanted 27 employes and an appropriation of \$171,747 for fiscal 1952. Mr. Brown endured a rather acid examination, especially when it developed that his Mr. Moreland, described as "liaison official with the House of Representatives", was unknown to the Congressmen. As the verbatim testimony shows, this was too much for Representative John J. Rooney, of Brooklyn, the Democratic chairman of the subcommittee:

"MR. ROONEY. While we are on this subject: Is there any particular reason why we have been denied the privilege of meeting with Mr. Moreland?"

"MR. BROWN. No, and I shall see that is corrected.

"MR. ROONEY. Perhaps you will not need to do so.

"Now, you say you wrote 6,300 letters to Members of Congress. That is about 31 a day, is it not?"

"MR. BROWN. Over the whole year, yes. That is the average. Of course, they were not all received in that ratio.

"MR. ROONEY. You do not show very much in results with regard to bills before the Congress, and now it turns out that

you are answering only approximately 31 letters a day, and you have a staff of 27 people that cost the taxpayers \$171,747.”⁴

The House Committee was even more scathing about entertainment lavished by the Department of State on visitors brought to this country under one phase of its “cultural relations” program. Very pleasant lunches, some of which the present writer has been privileged to attend, were given under this program to visiting firemen from all of our extensive list of Allies. Unfortunately the cost of these lunches, *vin et service inclus*, comes somewhat high by the luncheon standards of the American taxpayer who democratically foots the bill. In 1951 this lavish entertainment was averaging out at \$8.73 per guest per meal. To continue these free lunches, in 1952, the State Department requested an item of \$24,875.

Said the House Appropriations Committee: “The Department can and must, as far as this committee is concerned, dispense with such luxuries.”⁵

3.

WHILE ITEMS such as the above may seem trifling, they have real importance as examples of the profligate attitude that has replaced the parsimony enforced on the De-

⁴ House of Representatives, 82nd Congress, 1st Session, Dept. of State Appropriations Bill, *Hearings*, pp. 37-38.

⁵ *Committee Print*, p. 7.

partment of State in its greater days. Requested appropriations are still relatively modest, even though they soared from \$18,579,756 in fiscal 1932 to \$283,566,476 in fiscal 1952. In 1931 Congress cut only \$73,450 from the departmental estimates for the ensuing fiscal year; in 1951 it cut over \$55,000,000.

There is, however, nothing modest about the cost of the hand-outs now known as "foreign economic policy", which at least some high officials of the Department of State desire to direct under their undivided control.

Under the guise of strengthening its diplomatic hand the Administration has spent billions, and plans to spend billions more, on "foreign economic policy". The Marshall Plan was only the entering wedge in this field. What is known as "Point Four", meaning the fourth objective of President Truman's foreign policy as outlined in his Inaugural Address of January, 1949, is now being systematically pressed. Since the first three of these objectives—strengthening the United Nations, securing world economic recovery and discouraging aggression—were not too well attained, it is not surprising that there should be the greater emphasis on Point Four, defined by Mr. Truman as: "a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas".

In the State Department brochure on "Our Foreign Policy", already referred to, there is a section entitled "The Promise of Point Four". It says not a word as to eventual cost, but blandly asserts that "Congress put its approval on the program in April, 1950, and gave the

State Department the job of directing the work of technical co-operation". Actually Congress then did nothing of the kind. What it did was to cut the requested appropriation to the relatively trivial sum of \$34.5 million, to be spent by the State Department in exploratory surveys.

The Administration's long-range intent in regard to Point Four was first revealed in the study compiled by Gordon Gray, former Secretary of the Army, released by the White House on November 10, 1950. In making public this report on "Foreign Economic Policies" Mr. Truman said that its "guiding concept" is "the unity of foreign policy in its economic, political, military and informational aspects". But to the reader who penetrated behind the cloud of phrases it became clear that the real objective was to blanket the ECA organization into the Department of State, much as OWI was blanketed in after World War II, and then begin permanent foreign-aid spending on a formidable scale. Mr. Gray estimated that direct Federal grants "up to about 500 million dollars a year for several years, apart from emergency requirements arising from military action" would be required to initiate "needed, feasible and effective programs" of technical assistance.⁶

A fortnight after publication of the Gray Report, President Truman requested another study, on "the problems of the underdeveloped areas in relation to mobilization for defense". The agency to which this inquiry was assigned was the International Development Advisory Board, a quasi-independent organization under the chair-

⁶ *Report on Foreign Economic Policies*, p. 69.

manship of Nelson A. Rockefeller. But its letter of assignment from the President said flatly: "You will wish to formulate your recommendations in the light of the Gray Report's comprehensive analysis of our entire foreign economic policy."⁷

The IDAB report, entitled "Partners in Progress", was transmitted to the President on March 7, 1951, and was warmly approved by him. In a chapter entitled "Centralize for Action" it recommended "the speedy centralization and unification of major foreign economic activities . . . into one overall agency headed by a single administrator reporting directly to the President." This "Overseas Economic Administrator", said the report, "would operate under the overall foreign policy laid down by the Secretary of State on behalf of the President . . ."⁸

This proposed enlargement of the scope of foreign policy, and the administrative changes envisaged to make it effective, are so enormous as to demand the fullest Congressional inquiry, not only as to cost but also in respect to their functional desirability. In the meantime, the expense of the amorphous and undetermined transitional foreign policy is steadily mounting. On May 24, 1951, President Truman asked Congress for a special appropriation of \$8.5 billion to be spent overseas during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952. Of this sum \$6.25 billion was requested for "military assistance to other free nations"; \$2.25 billion for "economic assistance to other free nations". An "International Security Affairs Committee", under a State Department chairman, has been set

⁷ *Partners in Progress*, p. 90.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

up "to insure co-ordinated policy guidance" for the new foreign aid program, which Secretary Acheson says will require expenditure at the rate of \$8.5 billion per annum until 1955 at least. But Congress has not responded well.

It is the grandiose and unlimited nature of this foreign policy, "economic, political, military and informational", that in the last analysis explains the depreciation of the dollar, in spite of a program of taxation that promises to become more onerous than that ever carried without disaster by any other people. And it is impossible to assert that former President Hoover exaggerated in saying in his broadcast of October 19, 1950: "The United States, with all its resources, cannot long endure the present drain on our economy."

4.

THE FOREIGN POLICY of the United States will eventually be cut down to size, either by voluntary limitation of commitments or else by the economic collapse from overstrain that Stalin, not without reason, anticipates. When the inevitable retrenchment comes, in what framework will a deflated policy crystallize?

There is no question that all Americans unite on the necessity of defending not only the continental United States, but all of Latin-America and Canada as well. The most extreme "isolationist" would approve this as a minimum program. And to call this program "isolationist" is

a misnomer, since it involves active co-operation with 21 other republics and a self-governing British Dominion, plus existing British, Dutch and French colonies in the two continents of North and South America.

Unanimity on Pan-American defense springs not merely from its unquestionable importance for national security, but even more from traditional acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine, as valid a cornerstone of American foreign policy today as when it was first laid down, in 1823.

The Monroe Doctrine, however, was proclaimed in concert with Great Britain. It owed its initial efficacy to British sea power. It implied that if at any time Great Britain could not protect Canada, the United States would do so. Indeed the Anglo-American partnership set up by the Monroe Doctrine throughout carries the implication that the United States will assume mutual responsibilities if, as and when Great Britain lays them down.

Because this working agreement with Great Britain was implied, rather than specific, in the Monroe Doctrine, the interpretation of what the relationship involves politically has not always been uniform. There has been a willingness, demonstrated in every period of peril, to come to Britain's aid. This co-operative attitude, however, has never concealed some sharp disagreement in Anglo-American relations. On more than one occasion, notably in the Venezuelan dispute of 1895, the Monroe Doctrine has actually been invoked *against* Great Britain. In general, the Doctrine has meant that the United States supports Great Britain, but not all British policies and

commitments. Among the British, the reverse of this attitude is equally prevalent.

As long as Great Britain remained a powerful Empire, mistrust of its imperial policy was an impediment to any formal Anglo-American political connection. But as Great Britain has declined in strength, and become dependent on American support, this impediment has steadily diminished. Britain waging a war of naked aggression against two small Boer Republics in 1900 was an object for self-righteous American condemnation. Britain struggling vainly in 1950 to stamp out Communist guerrillas in Malaya was deemed worthy of American aid, not less so because we get most of our natural rubber from Malaya.

5.

UNDOUBTEDLY the growth of American industrial production, and the consequent growth in the needs of industry for imported raw materials, has helped to bring a significant change in the national attitude towards "imperialism". Our interest in an uninterrupted flow of certain "colonial" products has become much more pronounced in recent years, and with it has developed a disposition to regard as an enemy any agency that threatens that supply, and as an ally any agency that protects it.

Consequently the American attitude towards Empire

is changing; becoming much closer to that of the Nineteenth Century European Empires which used to be regarded here with deep suspicion. There is, still, an overlap in attitudes, a lingering of the old viewpoint that continues along with the growth of the new. We are illogically disposed to acclaim self-determination in principle while opposing it wherever our own vital interests are concerned, something that naturally adds to public confusion. But there can be little doubt as to which force is winning.

At the close of the last war the principle of self-determination was still active in American foreign policy. The Department of State approved independence for the Philippines, Korea, India, Burma and Indonesia. There was no reason to stop with these new nations. Indo-China and Malaya could logically have been added to the list of "liberated" peoples.

But a new attitude arose with realization that this "liberation" of "subject peoples" was actually playing into the hands of Communism. Lenin had written, after the first world war, that "We shall conquer Europe in a by-pass through Asia", and a quarter of a century later American diplomacy awoke to the significance of this remark. The awakening was not delayed by the tendency of the new Asiatic nations to side with Russia against the United States in the debates of the United Nations. As a result, there is no more talk of freeing Indo-China from French, and Malaya from British, control. And if the clock could be turned back it may be doubted that the State Department would now work for an independent Indonesia. In the ugly dispute over nationaliza-

tion of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, the American diplomacy on the whole supported that of the British Government.

So the American attitude towards imperialism has shifted, from clear-cut opposition to qualified support. And naturally Russian diplomacy has been quick to capitalize on the change. Here it seems fantastic that Russia should call the United States imperialistic, while Moscow poses in our old role of friend of the oppressed. But it doesn't seem so fantastic throughout the long belt of countries from Egypt to Korea.

6.

IN CHAPTER II it was said that: "The traditional methods used to achieve national security are aggrandizement and alliances." The United States is using both those methods today. It will clarify our thinking if we admit as much.

In the Pacific area, thanks primarily to the astute and careful diplomacy of John Foster Dulles, there has been arranged not merely a wholly friendly American settlement with Japan, but also a network of secondary agreements that could bring eventual stabilization, with an American military protectorate over Japan, Formosa and the Philippines. Mr. Dulles, Republican consultant to the Secretary of State, did all that could be done to ameliorate the disastrous consequences of Yalta, which Secretary Acheson so ill-advisedly sought to defend. It is

noteworthy that the keystone of Dulles' work was the "peace of reconciliation" with Japan.

This was a happy reincarnation of the old British practice, necessary under the balance of power policy, of treating the defeated enemy as an equal, whose friendship may be important. Ironic, and symptomatic of the decay of British statecraft, is the fact that the British Labor Government at first sought to impose punitive restrictions on Japanese economic recovery, yielding only to Mr. Dulles' insistence on a more ethical settlement.

In Europe, the North Atlantic Treaty makes us a military partner of ten governments, in addition to Canada. And the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has not merely formed its own military establishment. It has also organized permanent committees for the allocation and increased production of raw materials, with a special international Secretariat for that purpose established in Washington. This "International Materials Conference" is wholly outside U.N. and operates as the economic arm of the Atlantic alliance.

What is most remarkable about all this tremendous development is not the strength, but the absence, of popular opposition. The argument has not been over whether the United States should form an alliance with the European empires, which the Senate approved in 1949 by the overwhelming vote of 82 to 13. The debate has focussed on whether this decision implied all the results that have sprung from it, including virtual alliances with Spain, Turkey, Greece and Yugoslavia, and on whether or not the Administration has taken the people sufficiently into its confidence in developing the alliance policy.

This relative absence of criticism is at least partially explained by the background of the Monroe Doctrine. That always implied close co-operation with Great Britain. In 1948, Britain, then gravely weakened, allied itself with the French, Dutch and Belgian empires. Rather than make an alliance with Britain alone the United States in effect enlarged this "Western Union" to provide an "integrated defense" for Western Europe and its remaining colonial dependencies. Spain was then aligned with the "Grand Alliance", in spite of strong British and French disapproval of this step.

There is no question that defense of the remaining colonial possessions of the European empires—in Africa and Asia as well as America—is an essential strategic concept of NATO, the North American Treaty Organization, which is already the nucleus of a miniature League of Nations, but in this case built on the concept of an international army.

Much as NATO can be traced back to the Monroe Doctrine, so the American decision to defend Formosa, taken without any U.N. indorsement, can be traced back to the Open Door. The same applies to the new and imperial Pacific treaties. Public opinion virtually forced this belated effort to save something of what the Yalta agreement had surrendered in the Far East.

If the Truman Administration was ahead of public opinion in forming NATO, it was no less behind public opinion in standing for an active policy in behalf of the Chinese Nationalists. Had the State Department been left to its own devices, apparently the Far East would have been completely abandoned to Communist domina-

tion. In this area, certainly, it was the opposition party that sponsored imperialistic action.

The area of unity in present American foreign policy is therefore much wider than appears at first glance. Criticism centers not so much on what the State Department has done or left undone, but rather on the evasive and extravagant manner in which policy has been developed. Indeed the strongest opposition attack has focussed not on the aggressiveness but rather on the pusillanimity of our foreign policy, in regard to Communist China.

7.

AT THE CLOSE of World War II there was a faint possibility that the United Nations would establish a new international equilibrium. But such political success for this organization was never probable. It was based on the assumption that two victorious allies with nothing in common—the United States and Russia—would somehow continue in an amicable partnership. Even without the complicating factor of revolutionary Communism this Utopian outcome would have been most unlikely. We have noted “the historic tendency of allies to fall out as soon as the external threat that prompted the alliance is removed”. It is that tendency which undermined U.N.

As this organization failed, at least in its larger objectives, there arose the possibility of a restoration of the

Balance of Power, under the traditional British leadership. This would have involved, *first* a real unification of Western Europe; *second* a disposition on the part of a European Federal Union to throw its weight either and alternatively towards Russia or the United States, in order to hold the scales of power even. That scrupulous impartiality, as has been pointed out, is of the essence of the Balance of Power policy.

It was not possible, in the first place, for Western Europe to form a federal union. With the various reasons for this we do not here concern ourselves. The fact itself is obvious.

Even with political unity it would be very difficult for Western Europe to hold a balance between the United States and Russia. The whole dynamic of Communism demands unquestioning adherence to its creed. The whole dynamic of the West demands resistance to that tyranny.

Lacking the will to unite, but possessing at least in some measure the will to oppose Communism, it was inevitable that Western Europe, with its remaining African and Asiatic dependencies, should turn to America, for support and leadership. It was not inevitable that the United States should accept this responsibility. But it has done so.

In this book an effort has been made to sketch the predisposing factors in the decision that has been taken. To predict the future is no part of a study that has endeavored to be scientific. Yet, in concluding, some generalities are less in the nature of anticipation than of summarizing what is already said.

8.

IF THERE IS full-scale war between the Western world and Russia, the latter will lose but Communism, in one form or another, will quite probably win. Athens was fatally corrupted in destroying Sparta; the fiber of Rome was weakened in destroying Carthage; Britain seems permanently degraded, in physical power, by the destruction of Germany. There is no reason to suppose that our American Republic would happily survive the military triumph it could expect to achieve, at ruinous cost, against the U.S.S.R.

And one cannot anticipate that the Republic will in any case be only superficially affected by the existing strains. All of its institutions—political, economic, religious, educational and cultural—demand a diffusion of power. Our present foreign policy implies the utmost concentration of power. As that policy works out all our domestic institutions will be under more and more pressure to adapt themselves to permanently centralized control.

In that connection we may reasonably recall the conclusion reached by the great English historian, Arnold Toynbee, after his exhaustive inquiry into the rise and fall of civilizations:

“Whatever the human faculty, or the sphere of its exercise, may be, the presumption that because a faculty has proved equal to the accomplishment of a limited task within its proper field it may therefore be counted upon to produce

some inordinate effect in a different set of circumstances is never anything but an intellectual and a moral aberration and never leads to anything but certain disaster.”⁹

To avoid this “certain disaster” it is a minimum essential for the American people to scrutinize every administrative proposal carefully, to debate its implications thoroughly; to demand that the sum total of commitments be strictly limited to what the strength of the Republic can unquestionably support. Already there are grave preliminary warnings that our ability, both literally and metaphorically, is overtaxed. Nor is this wholly the fault of the Administration, which was obviously disposed to cut its losses in Asia.

The general tendency of the Executive, however, will always be to arrogate more power to itself. In an emergency that tendency is amplified, and is indeed accepted by many people as desirable.

In the protracted emergency which we now confront the course is therefore charted towards dictatorship unless the people and their representatives demand prior proof of necessity for every step that centralizes power in the Administration. That elementary precaution does not of itself mean a lack of faith in foreign policy leadership. It means, rather, an affirmation of faith in fundamental American principles.

For all its surface aberrations, and mistakes of direction, the foreign policy of the United States has lately been wavering around a natural evolutionary line, at a pace quickened and stimulated by the Communist im-

⁹ Arnold J. Toynbee: *A Study of History* (New York: Oxford University Press; 1939), Vol. IV, p. 504.

pact. That evolution could lead to the triumph of the principle of self-government everywhere; or it could lead to the extinction of that principle here at home. It was an ominous sign when it was argued that foreign policy should be taken out of politics. It is a healthy sign now that this vital subject has again become a matter of household concern and sharp Congressional debate.

For, as we have endeavored to show, there is fundamentally no more mystery in the theory of foreign policy than there is in that of the multiplication table. The American citizen is as competent to understand the one as the other. And the fewer the mysterious incantations, the more the factual town-hall discussion, the sharper the critical faculty in Congress and the press, the better the chances that American know-how will bring the Republic safely through the strain of the accelerated tempo under which we live and labor.