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## Nationalization Through Foreign Policy

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**T**he real character of a man is seldom fully revealed by what he says, or even likes to think, about himself. It is much more clearly defined in his relations with other men. Similarly, the real character of a government, composed of and directed by men, must be analyzed not merely from official declarations of lofty national purpose but also from its actual dealings with other governments—in other words, by foreign policy. At any given period foreign policy tells us much about the course a nation is following through the stormy seas of history.

Indeed, external relations are an even better test of governmental than of individual character. The dealings of a man with other men are controlled both by enforceable law and, at least to some extent, by implanted moral principles. As yet, there is no really effective law of nations and it is questionable that morality is ever strongly instrumental in the dealings of governments one with another. “My country right or wrong” is a sentiment generally

condoned, and seldom openly challenged. So that if a nation can be said to have a collective psyche, its development and quality will be reflected in foreign policy.

Furthermore, a written constitution is more effective in controlling the domestic than the foreign policy of a government. It can be intolerably disadvantageous to hamper your own sovereign in its dealings with others not subject to what Jefferson called "the manacles" of your own law. Ways to circumvent the spirit, if not the letter, of the organic law are the easier to find when dealing with other nations. Thus, while our Constitution gives Congress alone the power "to declare war," it is demonstrably possible for the United States to engage in "police action," undistinguishable from war, without Congressional approval. Foreign policy can therefore be strongly at variance both with the formal pretensions of those who conduct it and with the Constitution which these officials are sworn to uphold.

For instance, in a statement on "Back Door Spending," issued from his office on March 9, 1959, Senator Harry F. Byrd cited, as one of several instances, the fact that

there never was an appropriation for the \$3,750,000,000 British loan. Under this loan expenditures totalling \$2,050,000,000 were made in fiscal year 1947 and \$1,700,000,000 in 1948, at the convenience and desire of the British Government, and charged directly into the American federal debt. I am not quarreling with the purposes of the British loan. I cite it at this late date only as an example of one type of federal spending outside the appropriation process.

Therefore, some examination of the actual trend of American foreign policy is very important for consideration of the permanence of this Federal Republic.<sup>1</sup> If the United States is now the democracy that we so frequently call it, then it will be clear that our foreign policy is really controlled by the majority will of the American people. The truth of that conclusion is so debatable as to cast doubt on the hypothesis.

There is no question that the original policy of the United States was strongly isolationist. Even before the Union was formed, the Congress of the Confederation, on June 12, 1783, adopted a resolution saying: "The true interest of the States requires that they should be as little as possible entangled in the politics and controversies of European nations." Four years later, at the Constitutional Convention, Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina, sought to prove that an active foreign policy would be incompatible with the federal system then being formulated. In his words: "We mistake the object of our Government if we hope that it is to make us respectable abroad. Conquest or superiority among other powers is not, or ought not ever to be, the object of republican systems."<sup>2</sup>

Isolationism was further recommended as a permanent policy by President Washington in the famous Farewell Address (1796), still somewhat disconcertingly read aloud

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<sup>1</sup> A condensed but comprehensive survey is found in my *Foreign Policy of the United States*, Alfred A. Knopf (New York 1951).

<sup>2</sup> Ferrand, *Records of the Federal Convention*, Vol. I, p. 402. The ms., in Pinckney's handwriting, is in the Library of Congress.

to the House of Representatives on each anniversary of his birth. "The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations," said Washington, "is in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little political connection as possible. . . . 'Tis our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. . . ."

A quarter of a century later isolationism was again confirmed and strengthened by the Monroe Doctrine, which served as the cornerstone of our foreign policy for the remainder of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> It is too little realized that this was no mere "hands off" warning to Europe, but a well-balanced program drawn up with the advice and guidance of Jefferson and Madison. In the first part of his message to Congress (December 2, 1823) Monroe asserted that "the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintained, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers." But he promptly added: "In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do."

Then Monroe emphasized:

Our policy in regard to Europe . . . nevertheless remains the same, which is, not to interfere in the internal concerns of any

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<sup>3</sup> Incomparably the best documented and most objective study of the Doctrine is the Department of State's own *Memorandum on the Monroe Doctrine*, prepared by J. Reuben Clark, Undersecretary of State, dated Dec. 17, 1928, Govt. Printing Office (Washington 1930).

of its powers; to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us; to cultivate friendly relations with it, and to preserve those relations by a frank, firm and manly policy, meeting, in all instances, the just claims of every power, submitting to injuries from none.

The warning to Europe—not to intervene in the *New World*—was thus logically and properly balanced by a reciprocal pledge to Europe—not to intervene in the *Old World*. It was this judicious bilateral proposal that gave the Monroe Doctrine validity and prestige in international affairs, wholly independent of the physical power of the United States. When isolationism gave way to interventionism the admonitory part of the Monroe Doctrine of course lost all its moral strength and became entirely dependent on the physical power of the United States for its enforcement. This was itself an incentive to national, at the expense of federal, development. For the power of our government in external affairs is mobilized by and directed through Washington, not through the State capitals.

Isolationism, as an overall policy, demanded two specific applications to be enduring. It meant, first, that diplomatic recognition must be promptly extended to any stable government, regardless of the means by which it had acquired control. This was emphasized by President Monroe in the passage just quoted—“to consider the government de facto as the legitimate government for us.” The same thought had been earlier voiced by President Jefferson, when he said: “We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded,

that every one may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases, and change those forms at its own will.”<sup>4</sup>

The second corollary of isolationism was strict neutrality in the wars of other nations. This, too, was emphasized in the quoted passage of the Monroe Doctrine, with the more pride because neutrality had been successfully observed throughout the upheaval of the French Revolution. For a country with a population as heterogeneous in national origins as is that of the United States, neutrality was also intrinsically a desirable policy, the more so because of the commercial importance of “Freedom of the Seas,” to recall a once popular American slogan.

There was no part of their well-reasoned creed which American isolationists yielded more reluctantly than neutrality. After being drawn into World War I we were still an “associated” and not an “allied” power. On that definition the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and thereby stayed out of the League of Nations. Even today one finds doubts as to whether membership in the United Nations is really in the American interest. There are skeptics who still maintain that neutrality served this country better than the diametrically opposite policy of collective security, which starts from the premise that all “peace-loving” nations should combine to resist aggression by any government, anywhere. This leads on to the somewhat arbitrary division of “We or They,” under which we attempt to deny others the right of neutrality which we once claimed so vigorously for ourselves. It gets

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<sup>4</sup> Letter to Gouverneur Morris, March 12, 1793.

even more kaleidoscopic when the *we's* of one decade become the *they's* of the next, and we find ourselves making allies of former war-loving nations to prevent aggression from peace-loving Soviet Russia, permanently but naively defined as such in the U.N. Charter.

Another very present difficulty springs from the complete abandonment of isolationism that came with participation in World War II. Under the old practice of automatic recognition we quickly approved the establishment of all the Latin-American republics and were indeed more inclined to encourage than to discourage the nationalistic aspirations of subject peoples, from Ireland to Korea. Anti-colonialism can be quite a useful card in the diplomatic deck, as the Russians have disagreeably demonstrated by playing it with a good deal of skill themselves. But our diplomats can no longer denounce colonialism, not only because we have practiced it a bit ourselves but even more because we have made allies of the remaining colonial powers. Yet a belief that there is something un-American in the denial of political freedom to subject peoples still lingers in this country. It was demonstrated when we split with our French and British allies over the Suez Canal issue.

This dilemma of colonialism, like that arising from the reversal of position on neutrality, has consequences that bear directly on the subject of governmental form. When the people of a country are confused, or doubtful, about the rectitude of their government's foreign policy, it does not mean that this policy will be changed. To the extent that the country is really a political democracy its foreign

policy will eventually conform to public opinion. In this manner British democracy is liquidating the British Empire. But if a country is only a pseudo-democracy, its foreign policy may for a long time be something very different from what most of its people really want. It will then be expedient for those in charge of foreign policy to conceal the objectionable manifestations from those whose taxes pay the cost. Democratic pretense, therefore, tends to encourage a dishonest and increasingly dictatorial foreign policy, as Soviet Russia has consistently demonstrated.

Nobody is likely to deny that the foreign policy of the United States is now, in theory and practice, completely at variance with its original isolationist character. What is not so clear is whether this change reflects or presages an equally fundamental alteration in the character of our political system. Offhand, one would say that such a change has not yet come, because, even with due allowance for the Fourteenth and Sixteenth Amendments, the Constitution is still clearly that of a federal republic. But any review of constitutional development will also strongly indicate that a changing political philosophy is stretching the organic law to the very limits of its elasticity. One is again reminded of De Tocqueville, who anticipated that the Constitution would in time become a dead-letter document. "The government of the Union," he said, "depends almost entirely upon legal fictions." And only the naive "imagine that it is possible by the aid of legal fictions to prevent men from finding out and employing those



means of gratifying their passions which have been left open to them.”<sup>5</sup>

The very large authority granted to the President in the field of foreign policy is undoubtedly the easiest means of “gratifying passions” in a seemingly constitutional manner. This authority is greatly reinforced by the provision which makes him commander-in-chief of the armed forces. As the Roman Republic deteriorated, the position of Senator was frequently sought by military men as a good springboard for the leap to dictatorial power. To block any such development here, the founding fathers decided to make the chief executive the supreme military commander. The purpose was to insure that the army would always be under civilian control.

While a military man could by civilian election become commander-in-chief he would thereby become a civilian rather than a military commander. That was the clever idea, fortified by a number of precise constitutional checks, such as the limitation of military appropriations to the two-year term of each successive Congress. Further controls in the field of foreign policy were given to the Senate. With the President thus hemmed in, and chosen by the States acting separately through the Electoral College, there was no anxiety about the natural choice of General Washington as the first President. It is to be noted, however, that since the time of Jackson, when political democracy began to make headway, there has been a re-

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<sup>5</sup> *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, pp. 166 and 168-9.

current tendency to nominate generals for the Presidency. Coincident with this is an increasing disregard of Washington's warning that "overgrown military establishments . . . under any form of government are inauspicious to liberty, and . . . are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty."<sup>6</sup>

"Overgrown military establishments" became inevitable for the United States as soon as it accepted the role of world leadership, whether gladly or sadly. An active foreign policy without armed force to sustain it is a contradiction in terms. Men can influence other men by moral means alone. But governments, being amoral instrumentalities, can never be sure of influencing other governments without the latent coercion of military strength.<sup>7</sup> Bribery is not an adequate substitute, for the government that can be bought is for that very reason unlikely to stay bought when a higher bidder appears. So it follows that the magnitude of the American foreign-policy shift, from isolationism to whatever it should be called today, is accurately plotted by the consistently upward curve of our peacetime military expenditure.

Since defense is unquestionably a function of the national government this enormous outlay, continued year after year, is of itself a centralizing influence of the first magnitude. The economic and political importance of defense spending on the current scale will be given close

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<sup>6</sup> The Farewell Address.

<sup>7</sup> Reasons for the amorality of the state are examined in my *Power in the People*, Van Nostrand (New York 1949) Ch. V.

consideration in a subsequent chapter. Here only one rather obvious result need be mentioned. The defense planning necessary to implement a global foreign policy cannot be effective if the responsible military officers must come cap in hand to Congress, requesting the financial wherewithal as the Constitution demands. These technical officers alone are in a position to say what flow of funds is "adequate," and to fulfill their responsibilities they must demand that the flow be both continuous and assured for years in advance. Intercontinental ballistic missiles, with atomic warheads, cannot move from drawing board to operational perfection within the span of a single Congress.

The real determinant of defense spending is therefore the whole body of overseas commitments as made by the executive branch of the national government, of which the "democracy" as a whole knows little or nothing. Its legislative representatives may be partially informed, but are impotent to make any real cuts in the military estimates. If Congress does so it will not only be accused of endangering national security, but will also shortly be confronted with "deficiency" appropriations which must be voted because the money is already obligated. Therefore in fact, if not in theory, the constitutional control of Congress over military expenditure has been reduced to what is at best a pressure for economical management. Both federalism and representative government have been undermined, the first by draining power from the States to the national government, the second by concentrating the

power thus drained in the executive at the expense of the legislative branch. It is small consolation to call this dual degeneracy "democracy."

All this may well be an inevitable result of two world wars and their aftermath. Many are inclined to say with a shrug that it is the fault of the Kaiser, or of Hitler, Tojo, Stalin, Khrushchev or some other personal devil. But the issue we seek to confront is not where the blame lies, but what the development portends. And there is much evidence, far too little considered, that the trend has been advanced from internal as much as from external compulsion. Undoubtedly "overgrown military establishments" are currently forced upon us by Soviet policy. But it is highly doubtful that this is the whole truth. If the objective is to save the Federal Republic, we must look deeper than the external threat.

There is one modern political writer who saw very clearly that military centralization is helpful in undermining a federal republic. His name was Adolf Hitler. Chapter 10 of Volume II of *Mein Kampf*, which is devoted to an indictment of German Federalism as an obstacle to the triumph of national socialism, is well worthy of current attention by those who do not realize that a concentration of political power can be used for evil as well as for good—and is perhaps much more likely to be used for evil than for good.

Germany in 1924 was a federal republic, and almost the only feature of its government that pleased Hitler was the fact that the small professional army was a national instrument and not under the divided control of the various

States—Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and so forth—as had been the case until World War I. “The army,” wrote Hitler in 1924, “must definitely be kept away from all influences of the individual States.” From this he logically proceeded to the assertion that “we cannot permit any single State within the nation to enjoy political sovereignty.” And then:

National Socialism must claim the right to force its principles upon the entire German nation, and to educate Germany to its ideas and thoughts, without consideration of the former boundaries of the federated States. . . . National Socialist doctrine . . . has the life of a people to regulate anew, and therefore it must claim the positive right to ignore [internal] boundaries, which we reject.

In the United States, as in Germany, World War I led to the unification of all State military contingents under centralized direction and command. The Second Amendment, however, prevents complete absorption of the State militia in the national establishment, as Governor Faubus of Arkansas dramatically reminded those who had forgotten this part of the Constitution. In the United States, moreover, there is still a great deal of latent opposition to conscription by the central government as a settled and permanent policy. Here it is not so much our variant of national socialism but rather the constant drain of our “overgrown military establishment” that makes it, in the words of George Washington, “particularly hostile to Republican Liberty.” The taxes necessary, or deemed necessary, for defense cut down the financial resources of the States and make it all but impossible for most people to provide for their own security. Then more centralized tax-

ation is imposed to return to the States and people, under controls, a part of what has been taken from them! Hitler, who had plenty of political shrewdness, cleverly exploited a similar situation in Germany. In the chapter already cited, he wrote:

For reasons of self-preservation the Reich is forced today to curtail more and more the sovereign rights of the component States. . . . Since it drains the last drop of blood out of its citizens by tactics of financial extortion, it is bound to take away from them even the last of their rights, unless prepared to witness the general discontent some day turn into open revolution.

Then comes the punch-line:

a powerful national government may encroach considerably upon the liberty of individuals as well as of the different States, and assume the responsibility for it, without weakening the Empire Idea, if only every citizen recognizes such measures as means for making his nation greater.

What this suggests, in a manner difficult to refute, is that political democracy provides the ideal formula for converting a federal republic into a centralized empire. Encroachment on States' Rights and individual liberty, Hitler reasoned, will not be resisted "*if only every citizen recognizes such measures as means for making his nation greater.*"

In other words, the problem of empire-building is essentially mystical. It must somehow foster the impression that a man is great in the degree that his nation is great; that a German as such is superior to a Belgian as such; an

Englishman, to an Irishman; an American, to a Mexican: merely because the first-named countries are in each case more powerful physically than their comparatives. And people who have no individual stature whatsoever are willing to accept this poisonous nonsense because it gives them a sense of importance without the trouble of any personal effort. Empire-building is fundamentally an application of mob psychology to the sphere of world politics, and how well it works is seen by considering the emotional satisfaction many English long derived from referring to "the Empire on which the sun never sets." Some Americans now get the same sort of lift from the fact that the Stars and Stripes now floats over detachments of "our boys" in forty foreign countries.

But, as Hitler emphasized, "every citizen" must *himself* "recognize" that he is mysteriously transformed into a bigger person when his nation becomes imperial. He must *himself* say "ja" to the proposals of his government. That implies political democracy, under which the emotionalized majority "ja" is taken as binding on the minority of clear-thinking people who will be disposed to say "nein." For what he called "racial Germans" Hitler was not opposed to the *processes* of democracy, and indeed achieved control through their wholly normal operation. Once in power, however, he immediately sought to portray himself as the single embodiment of a German general will, using the concentration camps for all dissenters.

Stalin, we are told by those who knew him best, attempted the same personal embodiment of the general will

for Soviet Russia. The communists never condemned Hitler more bitterly than Khrushchev pilloried Stalin in his speech to the Twentieth Party Congress, in Moscow, on February 25, 1956. There the once all-highest was portrayed as one "who practiced brutal violence . . . toward that which to his capricious and despotic character seemed contrary to his concepts." In that speech the "cult of the individual" was attacked for its tendency to establish a ruler who "supposedly knows everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything, is infallible in his behavior." This cult, alleged Khrushchev, runs directly counter to the basic concepts of Marxism-Leninism. But it is certainly not counter to the even more basic concept of Rousseau's general will. It is not counter to the theory of political democracy. It did not even prevent Khrushchev from soon making himself another Stalin.

Our natural tendency is to say that the later leaders of Russia belatedly discovered in Stalin characteristics which we always knew were his. But, if we knew it, our own leaders were singularly blind to the defects of "Good Old Joe." When he was our ally, neither President Roosevelt nor Prime Minister Churchill ever described Stalin as "a capricious despot." Possibly we were then ourselves victims of "the cult of the individual." One recalls the general approval given to Roosevelt's edict that Germany must be "completely and permanently disarmed," and to Churchill's proud statement that he did not become Prime Minister "in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire." All this was only yesterday, historically



speaking, yet already the British Empire is largely liquidated and a chief anxiety of our State Department has been West German reluctance to build another army.

So Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill were curiously alike in completely misjudging the shape of things to come, though certainly none of them was deprived of the information necessary for good judgment. Furthermore, for all their differences one from another, each of these powerful national leaders regarded himself as qualified to speak for his nation as a whole, and to direct its destiny. Such similarities, between such very different characters, strongly suggests some common denominator operating to obscure the vision of these chiefs of state. And it would seem that this common denominator, in each of the four cases, was the undoubtedly sincere conviction that the particular chief of state was because of that office the authorized and responsible spokesman of a mystical national will—the *volunté générale* of Rousseau.

If there were some common factor operating in all of these four diverse cases, political scientists should be profoundly concerned to identify and analyze it, for surely anyone who calls himself a scientist will not be content to view the problem in the light of nationalistic prejudice. And there is a tremendous problem in this seemingly strong tendency to let one man assume control of the political direction of an entire nation.

There is clearly one way in which such a tendency would be encouraged—anywhere. Suppose it were argued that the majority will should control, and that minority

opinions, in either groups or localities, are contrary to the public welfare. Then, when the majority will has been expressed, those empowered to make it effective may properly feel a solemn responsibility to do so. These officials might even conclude that it is a positive *duty*, rather than a tyrannical act, to suppress obstructive minority opinions.<sup>8</sup> They would in consequence urge and welcome repressive action by their chief administrator, be he called Fuehrer, Duce, President, Prime Minister, Commissar or Generalissimo. And so in complete—perhaps inevitable—accord with the theory of democracy would come dictatorship.

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<sup>8</sup> This was argued by Theodore Roosevelt, then Governor of New York and Republican candidate for the Vice-Presidency, as far back as 1900: "It may be the highest duty to oppose a war before it is brought on, but once the country is at war the man who fails to support it with all possible heartiness comes perilously near being a traitor . . ." *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt*, Memorial Edition, Charles Scribner's Sons (New York 1923) Vol. XIII, p. 406. This is a considerable expansion of the Constitutional definition: "Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort." (Art. III, Sect. 3, Par. 1)