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REFLECTIONS ON A PARTNERSHIP:

BRITISH AND AMERICAN

ATTITUDES TO POSTWAR FOREIGN POLICY

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ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE

HENRY A. KISSINGER

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE

BICENTENARY OF THE

OFFICE OF FOREIGN SECRETARY

-

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REFLECTIONS ON A PARTNERSHIP: BRITISH AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES TO POSTWAR FOREIGN POLICY

BY HENRY A. KISSINGER

Introduction

Michael Howard, in his earlier lecture in this series, confirmed what I had suspected: that the United States deserves some of the credit for Britain's decision to create a Foreign Office in the first place. The Foreign Office was founded only a few months after the battle of Yorktown. The "politicians" of the time having just mislaid America, the need was evidently felt for some more professional machinery to run Britain's newly expanded sphere of "foreign" affairs.

Since then, Britain and America have never ceased to play important roles in each other's history. On the whole it has been a productive and creative relationship, perhaps one of the most durable in the history of nations. In the last 200 years, we have approached each other sometimes warily, and dealt with foreign affairs often from different perspectives. Still, on balance the relationship has been of considerable benefit to world peace. This has been true particularly of the period since the Second World War.

All accounts of the Anglo-American alliance during the Second World War and in the early postwar period draw attention to the significant differences in philosophy between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill reflecting our different national histories. America, which had never experienced a foreign threat to its survival, considered wars an historical aberration caused by evil men or institutions; we were preoccupied with victory defined as the unconditional surrender of the Axis. Britain had seen aggression take too many forms to risk so personal a view of history; she had her eyes on the postwar world and sought to gear wartime strategy toward forestalling Soviet domination of Central Europe. Many American leaders condemned Churchill as needlessly obsessed with power politics, too rigidly anti-Soviet, too colonialist in his attitude to what is now called the Third World, and too little interested in building the fundamentally new international order towards which American idealism has always tended. The British undoubtedly saw the Americans as naive, moralistic, and evading responsibility for helping secure the global equilibrium. The dispute was resolved according to American preferences--in my view, to the detriment of postwar security.

Fortunately, Britain had a decisive influence over America's rapid awakening to maturity in the years following. In the 1940s and 50s our two countries responded together to the geopolitical challenge of the Soviet Union and took the lead in creating the structures of Western cooperation for the postwar era which brought a generation of security and prosperity.

In the process a rather ironic reversal of positions took place. Today it is the United States that is accused of being obsessed with the balance of power, and it is our European allies who are charged by us with moralistic escapism.

I believe that the extraordinary partnership among the democracies will overcome the occasional squabbles that form the headlines of the day and, even more important, meet the objective new challenges that our countries face.

Philosophies of Foreign Policy

The disputes between Britain and America during the Second World War and after were, of course, not an accident. British policy drew upon two centuries of experience with the European balance of power, America on two centuries of rejecting it.

Where America had always imagined itself isolated from world affairs, Britain for centuries was keenly alert to the potential danger that any country's domination of the European continent--whatever its domestic structure or method of dominance--placed British survival at risk. Where Americans have tended to believe that wars were caused by the moral failure of leaders, the British view is that aggression has thrived on opportunity as much as on moral propensity, and must be restrained by some kind of balance of power. Where Americans treated diplomacy as episodic--a series of isolated problems to be solved on their merits--the British have always understood it as an organic historical process requiring constant manipulation to keep it moving in the right direction.

Britain has rarely proclaimed moral absolutes or rested her faith in the ultimate efficacy of technology, despite her achievements in this field. Philosophically, she remains Hobbesian: She expects the worst and is rarely disappointed. In moral matters Britain has traditionally practiced a convenient

form of ethical egoism, believing that what was good for Britain was best for the rest. This requires a certain historical self-confidence, not to say nerve, to carry it off. But she has always practiced it with an innate moderation and civilized humaneness such that her presumption was frequently justified. In the nineteenth century, British policy was a--perhaps the--principal factor in a European system that kept the peace for 99 years without a major war.

American foreign policy is the product of a very different tradition. The Founding Fathers, to be sure, were sophisticated men who understood the European balance of power and skillfully manipulated it to win independence. But for a century and more after that, America, comfortably protected by two oceans--which in turn were secured by the Royal Navy--developed the idiosyncratic notion that a fortunate accident was a natural state of affairs, that our involvement in world politics was purely a matter of choice. Where George Canning viewed the Monroe Doctrine in terms of the world equilibrium, "call[ing] the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old," Americans imagined the entire Western Hemisphere a special case, safely insulated from the rest of the world. We had created a nation consciously dedicated to "self-evident" truths, and it was taken for granted in most American public discourse that our participation (or non-participation) in the world could be guided exclusively by moral precepts. That geography gave us this luxury was only evidence of God's blessing upon us; we owed Him that quid pro quo. The competitive, sometimes cynical, and always relativistic style of European power politics was viewed in America as an unsavory example of what to avoid and as further evidence of our moral superiority.

In American discussion of foreign policy, even through much of the twentieth century, the phrase "balance of power" was hardly ever written or spoken without a pejorative adjective in front of it--the "outmoded" balance of power, the "discredited" balance of power. When Woodrow Wilson took America into the First World War, it was in the expectation that under American influence the postwar settlement would be governed by a "new and more wholesome diplomacy" transcending the wheeling and dealing, secrecy, and undemocratic

practices that were thought to have produced the Great War.[1] Franklin Roosevelt, on his return from the Crimean Conference in 1945, told the Congress of his hope that the postwar era would "spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries--and have always failed."[2] Both Wilson and Roosevelt put their faith in a universal organization of collective security in which the peace-loving nations would combine to deter, or combat, the aggressors. It was assumed that all nations would come to the same conclusions regarding what constituted aggression and be equally willing to resist it, no matter where it occurred, regardless of how far from their borders, irrespective of the national interest involved.

In the American view, nations were either inherently peaceful or inherently warlike. Hence, after World War II the "peace-loving" US, Britain, and USSR had together to police the world against Germany and Japan even though the former enemies had been rendered impotent by unconditional surrender. If there were doubts about the peace-loving virtue of our wartime allies, they seemed to many American leaders to apply as much to Britain as to the USSR: Roosevelt toyed with the idea of nonalignment between a balance-of-power-oriented, colonialist Britain and an ideologically obstreperous Soviet Union. Even Truman took care not to meet with Churchill in advance of the Potsdam conference; he did not want to appear to be "lining up" with Britain against the USSR. The secret dream of American leaders, if great power conflict proved unavoidable, was to arrogate to themselves the role to which the nonaligned later aspired: that of moral arbiter, hurling condescending judgments down at all those engaged in the dirty game of international diplomacy.

As late as 1949, the Department of State submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee a memorandum that strove mightily to distinguish the new North Atlantic Treaty from traditional military alliances and above all from any relationship to the very balance of power it was supposed to establish. The Treaty, the memorandum said,

> is directed against no one; it is directed solely against aggression. It seeks not to influence any shifting "balance of power" but to strengthen the "balance of principle."[3]

American attitudes until quite literally the recent decade have embodied a faith that historical experience can be transcended, that problems can be solved permanently, that harmony can be the natural state of mankind. Thus our diplomacy has often stressed the concepts of international law, with its procedures of arbitration and peaceful settlement, as if all political disputes were legal issues, on the premise that reasonable men and women could always find agreement on some equitable basis. Theodore Roosevelt won a Nobel Peace Prize for helping mediate the Russo-Japanese war in 1905; thus Alexander Haig's recent efforts on the Falklands have a long tradition behind them. There is also a perennial American assumption that economic well-being automatically ensures political stability, a belief which has animated American policies from Herbert Hoover's relief efforts after World War I to the Marshall Plan to the recent Caribbean initiative--never mind that, in many parts of the world, the timeframes for economic progress and the achievement of political stability may be seriously out of phase. In our participation in the two world wars of this century, and afterward, our bursts of energy were coupled with the conviction that our exertions had a terminal date, after which the natural harmony among nations would be either restored or instituted.

Disillusionment was inevitable. America fluctuated between moral crusading and frustrated isolationism, between overextension and escapism, between extremes of intransigence and conciliation. But history was kind to us. For a long time it spared us from the need to face up to fundamental choices. Not being called upon to help preserve the equilibrium--a service rendered gratis by Great Britain--we could avoid the responsibility of permanent involvement in world politics, of unending exertion with no final answers or ultimate resolution.

Even when the United States finally entered the world stage of permanent peacetime diplomacy after 1945, it did so under conditions that seemed to confirm our historical expectations. For several decades we had the overwhelming resources to give effect to our prescriptions, and thus conducted foreign policy by analogy to the great formative experiences of the 1930s and 40s: The New Deal translated into the Marshall Plan; resistance to Nazi aggression translated into the Korean "police action" and the policy of "containment." We tended to attribute our dominance in the Western Alliance to the virtue of our motives rather than to the preponderance of our power. In fact, the United States enjoyed nearly half the world's Gross National

Product and an atomic monopoly; our NATO allies, given their dependence, conducted themselves less as sovereign nations than as lobbyists in Washington decision-making.

It was therefore a rude awakening when in the 1960s and 70s the United States became conscious of the limits of even *its* resources. Now with a little over a fifth of the world's GNP, America was powerful but no longer dominant. Vietnam was the trauma and the catharsis but the recognition was bound to come in any event. Starting in the 70s, for the first time, the United States has had to conduct a foreign policy in the sense with which Europeans have always been familiar: as one country among many, unable either to dominate the world or escape from it, with the necessity of accomodation, maneuver, a sensitivity to marginal shifts in the balance of power, an awareness of continuity and of the interconnections between events.

Our perennial domestic debates reflect the pain, and incompleteness, of that adjustment. The American Right still yearns for ideological victory without geopolitical effort; the American Left still dreams of reforming the world through the exercise of goodwill unsullied by power. We are edging towards a synthesis but it will be a slow, painful, perhaps bitter process.

The Nature of the Special Relationship

That two countries with such divergent traditions could form a durable partnership is remarkable in itself. The periods of the close Anglo-American "special relationship," the object of such nostalgia today, were also times of occasional mutual exasperation.

For quite a while we stressed different aspects of our histories; in more senses than one, we lived in different time zones. It was only some while after the settlement of the *Alabama* affair just over a century ago that American and British interests began to run parallel. The need for intimacy seemed to be greater on this side of the Atlantic (that is, in Britain), and Britain began to avoid alliances that could entangle her against the United States--including a tantalizing offer from Germany around the turn of the century.[4] American memories were longer: The First World War was a temporary exertion, after which we withdrew into isolationism; during the 20s the US Navy Department still maintained a "Red Plan" to deal with the contingency of conflict with the British fleet.

It was not until the war with Hitler that the gap closed permanently. In the immediate postwar period we were held together by strategic circumstances which imposed the same necessities, whatever the different philosophical premises. American resources and organization and technological genius, and British experience and understanding of the European balance of power, were both needed to resist the sudden threat from the Soviet Union. The Marshall Plan and North Atlantic Treaty, while formally American initiatives, were inconceivable without British advice and British efforts to organize a rapid and effective European response. Ernest Bevin, as Professor Howard pointed out in the first lecture, was the indispensable architect of the European response as well as the staunch helmsman of Britain's journey from power to influence.

Even then, Anglo-American difficulties persisted occasionally. The anguished disagreements over immigration into Palestine; the misunderstandings over atomic cooperation; competition over Iranian oil; the abrupt, unilateral ending of Lend-Lease; and the race to demobilize were only some of the items in a stream of irritants. More serious policy differences were to follow in the 50s, causing Anthony Eden to reflect on the "tough reality of Anglo-American relations."[5] Even when the politics were parallel, the personalities were often divergent. Eden and Dean Acheson were friends as well as colleagues; the same could not be said for Eden and John Foster Dulles. Misunderstandings and conflicts of interest continued through European integration, the rearmament of Germany, and Indochina, right up to the tragic climax of Suez--to which I will return in a few moments.

That these irritations never shook the underlying unity was due to statesmanship on both sides. One factor was a brilliant British adjustment to new circumstances. To the outside world it may have seemed that Britain clung far too long to the illusion of Empire; in her relations with Washington, she proved that an old country was beyond self-deception on fundamentals. Bevin, the unlikely originator of this revolution in British diplomacy, shrewdly calculated that Britain was not powerful enough to influence American policy by conventional methods of pressure or balancing of risks. But by discreet advice, the wisdom of experience, and the presupposition of common aims, she could make herself indispensable, so that American leaders no longer thought of

consultations with London as a special favor but as an inherent component of our own decision-making. The wartime habit of intimate, informal collaboration thus became a permanent practice, obviously because it was valuable to both sides.

The ease and informality of the Anglo-American partnership has been a source of wonder--and no little resentment--to third countries. Our postwar diplomatic history is littered with Anglo-American "arrangements" and "understandings," sometimes on crucial issues, never put into formal documents. The stationing of B-29 atomic bombers in Britain in 1948 was agreed between political and service leaders but not committed to writing. Less happily, only general principles were recorded when Churchill and Roosevelt agreed in 1942 to cooperate in producing the atomic bomb. After Roosevelt died, Clement Attlee reflected with admirable restraint: "We were allies and friends. It didn't seem necessary to tie everything up."[6]

The British were so matter-of-factly helpful that they became a participant in internal American deliberations, to a degree probably never before practiced between sovereign nations. In my period in office, the British played a seminal part in certain American bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union--indeed, they helped draft the key document. In my White House incarnation then, I kept the British Foreign Office better informed and more closely engaged than I did the American State Department--a practice which, with all affection for things British, I would not recommend be made permanent. But it was symptomatic.[7]

For a brief moment in the early 1970s, Britain seemed to decide to put an end to the special relationship in order to prove itself a "good European" in the year that it entered the European Community. The attempt was short-lived.[8] By 1976, James Callaghan and Anthony Crosland had restored the traditional close relationship--without resurrecting the label--and it was enormously valuable, indeed indispensable, in the Southern Africa negotiations that began in that year. In my negotiations over Rhodesia I worked from a British draft with British spelling even when I did not fully grasp the distinction between a working paper and a Cabinet-approved document. The practice of collaboration thrives to our day, with occasional ups and downs but even in the recent Falkland crisis, an inevitable return to the main theme of the relationship.

Clearly, British membership in Europe has added a new dimension. But the solution, in my view, is not to sacrifice the special intimacy of the Anglo-American connection on the altar of the European idea, but rather to replicate it on a wider plane of America's relations with all its European allies, whether bilaterally or with a politically cohesive European Community--that is for Europe to decide. The special frankness and trust that may have been originally resorted to as compensation for a disparity of power may now be even more essential in the partnership of equals that must characterize the future relations between America and Europe.

Britain, America, and Europe

In fact, Europe has been a traumatic issue for both Britain and the United States.

Americans often forget that Britain, too, has been a reluctant internationalist, at least as far as Europe was concerned. Tradition pulled Britain across distant oceans. The glory of foreign policy was identified with Empire and Commonwealth, its problems and perils with the continent of Europe. It was Czechoslovakia--in the heart of Europe--which Chamberlain described as a small faraway country of which Britons knew little--after a century and a half of fighting on the borders of India.

In Britain, reluctance to enter Europe was always bipartisan, and somewhat mystical. Eden once said that Britain knew "in her bones" that she could not join it; and Hugh Gaitskell spoke of the impossibility of throwing off 1000 years of history. But there were more substantial reasons: worries about sovereignty--which on the Left was combined with concern for the unfettered development of socialist planning; an instinctive disinclination to deal with continentals on an equal footing; trade ties with the Commonwealth; and the special relationship. Even Churchill, despite his intimations of the future, remained as ambivalent in government as he had been prescient in opposition when he had called as early as 1947 for a United States of Europe. In office, he never quite found the balance among his three concentric circles--the Commonwealth, Europe, and the English-speaking peoples.

Only after Suez did the risks of isolation become obvious, as well as the opportunity that the emerging Europe offered for exercising in a different but equally effective form

Britain's traditional role of guardian of continental equilibrium. If the economic benefits were ambiguous, the political necessities were not: Only as one of the leaders of Europe could Britain continue to play a major role on the world scene.

By entering the European Community, Britain did not abandon her instinct for equilibrium. But for the first time in peacetime she threw herself into the scales. As I have already noted, she did so with the fervor of a frustrated convert who had been kept waiting for a decade at the doors of destiny.

If Britain has had a difficult adjustment to make in its relationship to Europe, so has the United States.

After the war, American leaders applied a heavy dose of our usual missionary zeal and the full rigor of our "problem-solving" energy to the task of promoting European integration. Federalism, of course, was a hallowed American principle. Shortly after the Philadelphia Convention, Benjamin Franklin was urging on the French the attractions of a federal Europe. A similar evangelism, in a more practical form, shone through the Marshall Plan. Even Acheson, not usually seen as a moralist, was carried away by the European idea; he recalled listening to Robert Schuman outlining his plan for a European Coal and Steel Community: "As he talked, we caught his enthusiasm and the breadth of his thought," Acheson wrote, "the rebirth of Europe, which, as an entity, had been in eclipse since the Reformation."[9]

Despite the idealism of our commitment, tensions between America and a unified Europe were inherent in the logic of what we were so enthusiastically endorsing. We had grown accustomed to the devastated, temporarily impotent Europe of the postwar period; we forgot the Europe that had launched the industrial revolution, that had invented the concept of national sovereignty, and that had operated a complex balance of power for three centuries. A Europe reasserting its personality was bound to seek to redress the balance of influence with the United States; Charles de Gaulle in this respect differed largely in method from Jean Monnet, who never disguised his hopes for a more powerful and effective European voice.

Thus, later American disillusionments were inherent in our goals. It was naive for Americans to take for granted that a federal Europe would be more like us, that a united Europe would automatically help carry our burdens, and that it would

continue to follow American global prescriptions as it had in the early postwar years of European recovery--and dependency. That cannot be so.

Yet even if some of our more unhistorical expectations were disappointed, our original judgment was correct: European unity, strength, and self-confidence are essential for the future of the West. It is beyond the psychological resources of the United States--not only the physical--to be the sole or even the principal center of initiative and responsibility in the non-Communist world. (This is one reason why I always favored the independent British and French nuclear deterrents.) American support for European unification was therefore an expression of self-interest even if it paraded under the banner of altruism; it was to our advantage even if we paid occasionally in the coin of clashing perspectives--provided we found a way toward creative unity on fundamentals.

Britain, Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union

The central foreign policy problem that Britain, America, and Europe have had to confront together since 1945 is, of course, the Soviet Union. And the need for creative unity among us as we do so has not ended.

One thing that is clear from the historical record is that neither side of the Atlantic has had a monopoly of special insight into this problem. As soon as the war had ended, both Britain and America fell over each other in the rush to demobilize. All American troops were due to leave Europe by 1947. After a visit to Moscow in May 1945, Harry Hopkins told President Truman that he saw no major sources of conflict between America and Russia on the horizon.[10]

After Churchill left office, British policy for a brief period ironically fell prey to some of the same illusions that had bedeviled American leaders. The Labour Government at first hoped that "Left could speak unto Left." The brief moment of nostalgia reflected the hope that Britain would stand neither for the unbridled capitalism of the United States nor for Soviet Communism. A resolution calling for the "progressive unity" between the British Labour and Communist parties was only narrowly defeated. There is not much doubt, in fact, that once the US was committed after the Greek-

Turkish aid program in 1947, some in Britain were tempted--as Roosevelt and Truman a few years earlier--by the idea of enhancing British influence by remaining aloof not just from Europe but from the emerging superpower confrontation, adding to her traditional role as manipulator of the balance in Europe that of intermediary between East and West. This attitude has reappeared in some circles in Europe today.

No amount of revisionist distortion can change the fact that it was the Kremlin which turned Anglo-American hopes into mirages. There is today in some circles a curious assumption of diabolic Soviet cleverness and foresight. Yet in those years, Stalin's conduct of relations with his former allies made him the chief architect of NATO. A few more fleeting smiles on the wooden features of Mr. Molotov, and a modicum of self-restraint and diplomatic delicacy, would have done much to prise apart the young and still brittle Atlantic cooperation: and all the boys might have been home, as planned, by 1947.

The Soviets did not manage this degree of subtlety. Instead, Moscow went out of its way to estrange and alienate, where it could have softened through a little courtship, however heavy-handed. The Russians declined Britain's invitation to send a Soviet contingent to a victory parade, and Stalin side-stepped an offer from Attlee to renew the wartime alliance. Every door that Ernest Bevin, mindful of the influential left wing of his party, was careful to keep open was resoundingly slammed and loudly bolted. As was soon to be shown in the persecution of social democrats in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union countenanced only one form of "socialism" and fought other, democratic versions even more bitterly than capitalists. The outright Soviet rejection of the Marshall Plan was an egregious blunder; a mild expression of interest, however disingenuous, could have caused untold disruption and delay in the Western camp. Acceptance would have changed the face of postwar politics.

It was one of those moments when America's activism and idealism brought out the best in her. The 40s were years of imaginative men and bold measures on both sides of the Atlantic: The Marshall Plan, the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin airlift, the Brussels treaty, and finally NATO, were inspired and creative initiatives. And in the years following, the United States and its allies stood fast against Soviet pressures and blackmail in crises over Korea, Berlin, and missiles in Cuba.

But we in America had only begun to scratch the surface of the long-term problem of US-Soviet relations in the nuclear age, which would soon produce more ambiguous challenges. The problem was, at bottom, conceptual. Americans were uncomfortable with the notion of a Cold War. They tended to treat war and peace as two distinct phases of policy. Total victory was the only legitimate goal for war; conciliation the appropriate method for peace. In this sense the postwar period fulfilled neither of America's conceptual expectations. If in wartime we lacked a sense of political strategy, in peacetime we had difficulty forming an understanding of the permanent relation between power and diplomacy. The policy of containment, and its variant called "negotiation from strength," was based on the experience with the anti-Hitler coalition. It focused on the buildup of military strength towards some hypothetical day of greater parity; it aimed at eventual negotiation of some kind with the Soviet Union but offered no clue as to either its timing or its content, nor even a clear definition of the nature of the relevant military strength. George Kennan's famous "X" article in Foreign Affairs in 1947 looked vaguely to the eventual "mellowing" of the Soviet system; Dean Acheson spoke of building "situations of strength" which, somewhere down the road, would induce the Kremlin "to recognize the facts..."[11] But how precisely this negotiation would emerge or to what end it would be conducted was left vague.

The flaw in containment was not only, as the cliché has it today, that it was overly preoccupied with military counterforce but that it misunderstood that the West in the immediate postwar period was precisely at the apex of its relative strength. Containment thus deferred the moment for a diplomatic encounter with the Soviet Union to a later time by which Soviet power could only have grown. In 1945 the United States had an atomic monopoly and the Soviet Union was devastated by 20 million casualties. Our policy paradoxically gave the Kremlin time to consolidate its conquests and to redress the nuclear imbalance. The West's military and diplomatic position relative to the USSR was never more favorable than at the very beginning of the containment policy in the late 40s. That was the time to attempt a serious discussion on the future of Europe and a peaceful world.

As so often, Winston Churchill understood it best. In a much neglected speech at Llandudno in October 1948, out of office, he said:

> The question is asked: What will happen when they get the atomic bomb themselves and have accumulated a large store? You can judge yourselves what will happen then by what is happening now. If these things are done in the green wood, what will be done in the dry? If they can continue month after month disturbing and tormenting the world, trusting to our Christian and altruistic inhibitions against using this strange new power against them, what will they do when they themselves have huge quantities of atomic bombs?... No one in his senses can believe that we have a limitless period of time before us. We ought to bring matters to a head and make a final settlement. We ought not to go jogging along improvident, incompetent, waiting for something to turn up, by which I mean waiting for something bad for us to turn up. The Western Nations will be far more likely to reach a lasting settlement, without bloodshed, if they formulate their just demands while they have the atomic power and before the Russian Communists have got it too.[12]

So the postwar world came into being. A precarious peace was maintained, based on a nuclear equilibrium, with occasional negotiations to ease tensions temporarily, but ultimately dependent on a balance of terror. The problem of maintaining security took on an unprecedented new dimension. Technology was soon to make the United States directly vulnerable to attack; the Atlantic Alliance increasingly based its defense strategy on reliance on weapons of mass destruction that posed risks more and more difficult to reconcile with the objectives being defended.

In the nuclear age, peace became a moral imperative. And it imposed a new dilemma: The desire for peace is the mark of all civilized men and women. Yet the democracies' desire for peace, if divorced from a commitment to defend freedom, could turn into a weapon of blackmail in the hands of the most ruthless; if the desire to avoid nuclear war turns into undifferentiated hysteria, nuclear blackmail may well be encouraged. The problem of the relationship of power to peace, the balance between ends and means, has been evaded for a generation by an abdication to technology. But history tolerates no evasions. To develop a strategy that relates ends to means, to build military forces that avoid the choice between Armageddon and surrender, is a preeminent moral as well as political problem for

our period. Of at least equal importance is to develop an Allied consensus behind proposals of arms control based on analysis not panic and freed of either the quest for confrontation or the tendency towards abdication.

Third World Perspectives: What is the Limit of Inter-Allied Conflic

In a period of nuclear stalemate, ironically, conflict became more likely at the level of local, nonnuclear crisis. In an age of decolonization, many of these clashes were bound to occur in the Third World. This was another area in which, in the immediate postwar period, American and European attitudes diverged sharply.

Americans from Franklin Roosevelt onward believed that the United States, with its "revolutionary" heritage, was the natural ally of peoples struggling against colonialism; we could win the allegiance of these new nations by opposing and occasionally undermining our European allies in the areas of their colonial dominance. Churchill, of course, resisted these American pressures, as did the French and some other European powers for a longer period than did Britain.

As Europe decolonized, partly under American pressure, there began a reversal of roles, the march by each side towards the philosophical positions vacated by the other--to an America focused on international security and a Europe affirming general moral precepts of conduct. On Third World issues especially, many in Europe have ended up adopting the attitude embodied in Roosevelt's anticolonialism and Eisenhower's conduct over Suez. Now Europe would seek to identify with Third World aspirations, economic and political, intensifying its efforts at conciliation the more insistent, peremptory, and radical that Third World demands become. At the same time, the United States, at least in some administrations, has come to a perception closer to Eden's: that appeasement of radical challenges only multiplies radical challenges.

Different perceptions of national interest were involved as well. Thus in the India-Pakistan war of 1971 Britain did not share our sense of concern for the country which had opened the first tenuous links to China; the historic nostalgia for India was too strong. So too in the early stages of the Falkland crisis America hesitated between its Atlantic and its Western Hemisphere vocations. But neither of these disagreements did any lasting damage. In the end we came

together; the old friendship prevailed over other considerations.

The lesson I draw is that in the Third World we may occasionally operate from different perspectives. But we must take care not to let these differences reach a point where they undermine the basic self-confidence and sense of mission of the other party, lest we threaten prospects for progress and stability transcending the immediate issue.

In this context the experience of Suez is instructive. Our prolonged and never-reconciled clash had lasting consequences not only for the Middle East and the Third World but also for the long-term evolution of Western policies.

The details of that disaster are not relevant to my immediate purpose. The British-French expedition against the Suez Canal was clearly misconceived. The fact remains that Eden had got hold of what was intellectually the right problem, while the American reaction, among other things, begged some crucial questions: to what extent our "revolutionary" historical analogy was relevant; to what extent it was wise to humiliate one's closest ally; and what would be the long-term consequence of such a course.

Britain and France, in my view, were acting on a strategic analysis which may have been traditional and even self-serving but was far from frivolous. Nasser was the first Third World leader to accept Soviet arms and to play the radical, pro-Soviet game in an attempt to blackmail the West. Eden's perception was that a dangerous precedent was being set: can there be any dispute of this today? Had Nasser's course been shown a failure, a quite different pattern of international relations would have developed, at least for a decade or more. As it turned out, Nasser's policy was vindicated; revolutions spread in the Middle East in the following years, and he has countless imitators today around the world relying on Soviet arms to increase their influence and to destabilize their neighbors.

Even more important, our humiliation of Britain and France over Suez was a shattering blow to these countries' role as world powers. It accelerated their shedding of international responsibilities, some of the consequences of which we saw in succeeding decades when reality forced <u>us</u> to step into their shoes--in the Persian Gulf, to take one notable example.

Suez thus added enormously to America's burdens--and simultaneously fueled a European resentment at America's global role which continues to this day.

It is clear that a world of progress and peace requires that more than 100 new and developing nations be made part of the international system; no international order can survive unless they feel a stake in it. It is incontestable that many conflicts in the developing world arise from legitimate social, economic, or political grievances; this, however, does not exclude the possibility that these can be exploited by extremists and turned against the long-term security interests of the West. The democracies, whatever their shifting positions, have failed to relate their philosophical and moral convictions to a coherent analysis of the nature of revolution and an understanding of how best to foster moderation. Above all, disputes among the democracies over this problem should not be permitted to turn into a kind of guerrilla warfare between allies. Whatever the merit of the individual issue, the price will be a weakening of the West's overall psychological readiness to maintain the global balance.

The strategic position or self-confidence of a close ally on a matter it considers of vital concern must not be undermined. It is a principle of no little contemporary relevance. In this sense the Falkland crisis in the end will strengthen Western cohesion.

Suez, by weakening Europe's sense of its own importance as a world power, accelerated the trend of Europe's seeking refuge in the role of "mediator" between the United States and the Soviet Union. The role that some American leaders naively saw the United States as playing between Churchill and Stalin, in the end too many Europeans seek to adopt between Washington and Moscow.

It is not a new phenomenon. It began, at least where Britain was involved, as wise advice to us that negotiation could be an element of strategy. This is a lesson of which Americans often need to be reminded. It has its antecedents in Attlee's flight to Washington for reassurance when Truman seemed to hint at using nuclear weapons in Korea; in Eden's efforts at various Geneva conferences to sponsor a dialogue in the era of Dulles's moralism; in Macmillan's appearance in an astrakhan hat in Moscow in 1959; in the strenuous Western European importunings of the Nixon Administration in 1969 to join Europe in the pursuit of détente. But carried too far,

it runs the risk of abdicating any share of responsibility for a cohesive Western strategy toward the USSR, or toward anti-Western radicalism in the Third World.

And thus we see the ironic shift of positions reflected in some of our contemporary debates. The deprecation of the importance of power, the abstract faith in goodwill, the belief in the pacific efficacy of economic relations, the evasion of the necessities of defense and security, the attempt to escape from the sordid details of maintaining the global balance of power, the presumption of superior morality--these features once characteristic of America now seem to be more common in Europe. Where the United States has never quite abandoned its earlier moralism or fully developed a concept of equilibrium as Europe had once maintained, many in Europe paradoxically seem to have adopted some of the illusions that Americans clung to in years of isolation from responsibility.

The unity of the industrial democracies remains crucial to the survival of democratic values and of the global equilibrium. We must at last answer the perennial questions of all alliances: How much unity do we need? How much diversity can we stand? An insistence on unanimity can be a prescription for paralysis. But if every ally acts as it pleases, what is the meaning of alliance? There is no more important task before the Alliance than to deal with these problems concretely, seriously, and above all immediately.

The Contemporary Debate

Let me make a few general points, therefore, about the contemporary debates between America and Europe.

I do not claim that the United States is always correct in its perceptions. But Europeans ought to take care not to generate such frustrations in America that either an embittered nationalism, or unilateralism, or a retreat from world affairs could result.

I fully acknowledge that the United States by its actions has sometimes stimulated or intensified the feelings in Europe that Europe had to strive to maintain its own interests, its own policies, its own identity. Indeed, as I said, naive American expectations that a rejuvenated Europe would follow our lead are partly responsible for the sometimes petulant

reaction to Europe's assertions of its own role. In recent times the United States may have appeared unintentionally callous toward the danger of nuclear war or insufficiently alert toward the opportunities for peace. But the United States has nevertheless been more nearly correct than its critics in warning that those who seek peace not backed by strength will sooner or later find the terms of peace dictated to them; that peace to be meaningful must be just; that nations live in history, not utopia, and thus must approach their goals in stages. To ask for perfection as a precondition of action is self-indulgence, and in the end an abdication.

Observers, including myself, have been sounding the alarm for decades about this or that "crisis" in the Western Alliance. But today's, I am afraid, is more genuinely, objectively, serious than ever. It comes after decades of a relentless Soviet military buildup, when the West, for a decade, is edging in some areas toward a dangerous dependency on economic ties with the East; while in Poland the Soviet Union enforces the unity of its empire, its clients press on to undermine the security interests of the West from Southeast Asia to the Middle East to Africa to Central America. Not all our difficulties are caused by the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union has shown little restraint in exploiting them, and their solution --whatever their cause--has been impeded by the lack of a unified Western response.

One of Britain's contributions to the Western Alliance has been to supply a needed global perspective: the knowledge, from centuries of experience in Europe, that peace requires some clear-eyed notion of equilibrium and a willingness to maintain it; the insight, from centuries of world leadership, that Europe's security cannot be isolated from the broader context of the global balance; the awareness, from heroic exertions in this century, that those who cherish the values of Western civilization must be willing to defend them. In the Falkland crisis, Britain is reminding us all that certain basic principles such as honor, justice, and patriotism remain valid and must be sustained by more than words.

The issue before the allies now is not to assess blame but to face our future. An alliance at odds over central issues of East-West diplomacy, economic policy, the Middle East, Central America, Africa, and relations with the Third world is in serious, and obvious, difficulty. Indeed it cannot be called an alliance if it agrees on <u>no</u> significant

issue. Sooner or later such divisions must affect the field of security. For too long, all of us in the community of free nations have put off the uncomfortable questions; our evasions are now coming home to roost.

Thirty-five years ago after the war, the democracies for a time overestimated the immediate dangers and underestimated their own capabilities; yet in the end they came up with a creative and effective response. Today too, we may be underrating our own capacities and confusing long- and short-term dangers.

The strange aspect is that the disarray is taking place at the precise moment that the bankruptcy of the system that denies the human spirit seems to become clear beyond doubt. The Communist world has fundamental systemic problems and has not shown any ability to solve them except by recurrent brute force, which only delays the day of reckoning. In the sixty-five-year history of the Soviet state, it has never managed a legitimate, regular succession of its political leadership; the country faces the demographic time-bomb of its growing non-Russian population, soon to be a majority. The system has failed to deal seriously with the desire for political participation of its intellectual and managerial elite. Or else it has sought to preempt their political aspirations by turning the ruling group into a careerist "new class" bound to produce stagnation if not corruption. Its ideology is a discredited failure, without legitimacy, leaving the Communist Party a smug privileged elite with no function in the society except its own self-perpetuation, struggling to deal with bottlenecks and crises which its own rigidity has caused. It is an historic joke that the ultimate crisis in every Communist state, latent if not evident, is over the role of the Communist Party.

Soviet economic peformance is a disaster. It seems impossible to run a modern economy by a system of total planning, yet it seems impossible to maintain a Communist state without a system of total planning. How ironic that the West is tearing itself apart over how best to coordinate Western financial, technological, and agricultural aid to a so-called "superpower" incapable of sustaining a modern economy.

In short, if Moscow is prevented by a coordinated Western policy from deflecting its internal tensions into international crises, it is likely to find only disillusionment in the boast that history is on its side.

It is the Communist world, not the West, that faces a profound systemic crisis. Ours are problems of coordination and policy, theirs are of structure. And therefore it is not beyond the realm of hope that a coherent, unified Western policy could at long last bring into view the prospect of a negotiated global settlement that Churchill foresaw at Llandudno.

The solutions to the West's problems are, to a significant degree, in our own hands.

One problem is that the democracies have no forum for addressing the future in a concrete way, let alone harmonizing disagreements or implementing common policies. As my friend Christopher Soames has recently emphasized, the Atlantic Alliance has no institutional machinery for addressing economic or Third World issues, or any long-term political strategy; the European Community, while eminently successful in its political coordination, has no mechanism as yet for formulating a coherent European view on matters of defense. The economic summits of Western and Japanese leaders, begun in the mid-70s, are an attempt to surmount this procedural impasse, but they can do little more than call key leaders' attention to key problems in an informal, unsystematic way. Procedures do not solve substantive problems. Nevertheless, creating an appropriate forum for broader and deeper consultation would be an important first step.

America has learned much in the postwar period, perhaps most of all from Britain. In the last decade we have also learned something of our limits, and in the new Administration we have shaken off the trauma of perhaps excessive preoccupation with our limits. An America that has recovered its vitality and its faith in the future is as much in the interests of the West as a Europe shaping its identity.

Both Britain and America have learned that whatever their histories, their futures are part of the common destiny of freedom. Experience has taught that moral idealism and geopolitical insight are not alternatives but complementary; our civilization may not survive unless we possess <u>both</u> in full measure. Britain and America, which have contributed so much to the free world's unity and strength, have another opportunity now, together with our allies, to show that the democratic nations are the masters of their destiny.

Thank you.

NOTES

[1] Woodrow Wilson, address before the League to Enforce Peace, Washington, D.C., May 27, 1916.

[2] Franklin D. Roosevelt, address to Congress on the Yalta (Crimea) Conference, March 1, 1945.

[3] U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on the North Atlantic Treaty, 81st Cong., 1st sess. (1949), pt. 1, Appendix, p.337.

[4] See R.B. Mowat, The Diplomatic Relations of Great Britain and the United States (London, 1925), p.92.

[5] Anthony Eden, Full Circle (Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Mifflin Co., 1960), p.225.

[6] Clement Attlee and Francis Williams, Twilight of Empire (New York: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1962), p.108.

[7] Henry Kissinger, Years of Upheaval (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson/Michael Joseph, 1982), pp.274-286.

[8] Ibid., pp.140-143.

[9] Dean Acheson, Sketches from Life (New York: Harper & Bros., 1961), pp.36-37.

[10] Attlee and Williams, above, p.161.

[11] U.S. Senate, Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings on the Military Situation in the Far East, 82nd Cong., 1st sess. (1951), p.2083.

[12] Winston Churchill, speech at Llandudno, October 9, 1948, in New York Times, October 10, 1948.