Chapter 8

FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMACY

INTRODUCTION

Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations — entangling alliances with none.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

The American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers.

JAMES MONROE

I had rather have everybody on my side than to be armed to the teeth.

WOODROW WILSON

WHEN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA was born it declared to "the powers of the earth" that it had assumed a "separate and equal station" among them. With this status, it was claimed, went "full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do." A decade later, one of the principal arguments for transforming the confederation that had made this declaration into a strong federal union — a unified national state — was that the change would make possible more effective provision for the external security and foreign relations of the new nation.

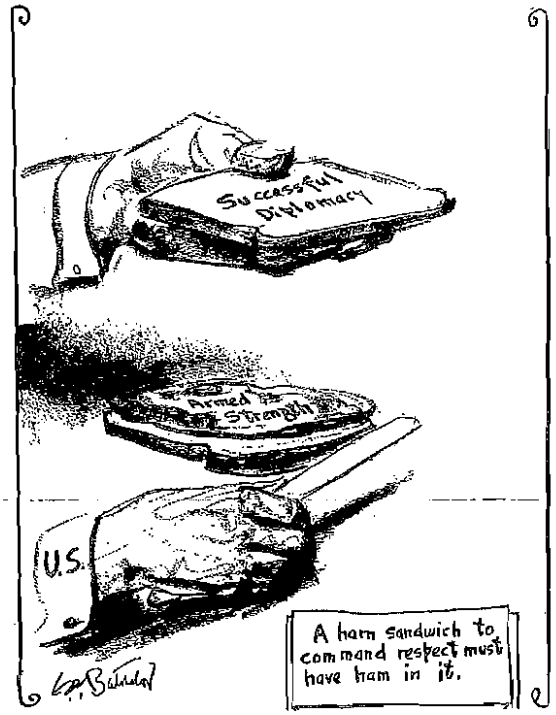
Thus the basic issues of foreign policy and of the best use of force and diplomacy to carry it out were raised from the first. To win its independence the United States had formed a military alliance and made other arrangements with the European powers, but the new situation made possible new approaches. One of these was to follow the way of isolation or neutrality — to maintain correct, formal relations with the European nations, for the minimal needs of intercourse, trade, and protocol, but, outside of this, to remain aloof. This policy of isolationism or neutralism has been held up as a national ideal in almost every period of U.S. history.

Had the new republic been located on a self-sufficient island, no alternative or additional policies need have arisen in its early development. But the original United States

was located on the coastal fringe of a vast continent, which its people were eager to settle and exploit. Hence it seemed natural to follow a policy of territorial expansion, acquiring by conquest or negotiation immediately contiguous areas, resources, and even people. The history of the first century of the republic is the story of this continental expansion. The reason that foreign relations were involved in what may seem a merely internal movement was that other nations — the great European powers, as well as the Indian "nations" — held the area by rights of discovery, title, treaty, or traditional possession. And there were often Europeans, as well as Indians, on the vast "empty" lands.

This expansion was a westward movement, but the continent extended north and south too, and it had a sister continent to the south. Aside, then, from the ambition to expand into the whole of North America — including Canada and Central America — there arose quite early the notion of a hemispheric policy. Accepting the existence of other American republics and peoples and assuming that the Americas constituted a distinct sphere in world politics, the United States declared a policy of special interest and influence in the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine, which formulated this policy, became a touchstone of national interest abroad.

The Pan-American emphasis, couched in terms of the mutual interests and security of the American republics, could mean not only hemispheric isolationism but also hemispheric expansionism. A new type of foreign policy emerged — imperialism, the control of other nations and dependencies to serve the national interest or, indeed, the interests of civilization as a whole. Imperialism included everything from direct conquest and annexation to covert control to economic penetration and ascendancy. It began in both the Caribbean and the Pacific at the end of the nineteenth century, and it



Courtesy, C. D. Batchelor, New York "Daily News"

marked the advent of the United States as a world power.

In the twentieth century the country was involved in political and economic affairs in two hemispheres, and its power and influence were committed in many parts of the world. Hence, joining in a coalition with other great powers, even to the point of armed intervention in far-off places, became a live possibility. Participation of the United States in World Wars I and II and subsequent mutual defense pacts marked a new phase in its foreign policy. The polar opposite of isolationism was reached in the new policies of interventionism and "containment."

Certain basic issues and emphases have continued through these shifts of policy. From the beginning and down to the final third of the twentieth century, Americans have believed that their nation was something unique and special, intended to be a shining example of civil society, a light to the other nations of the world. This notion of America as "a city set upon a hill," and

as a beacon to less fortunate peoples, has been used to justify both isolationism and interventionism. For some it has meant remaining aloof from foreign quarrels and serving the world by doing the work of peace and progress. For others it has meant carrying the light and the power of America's moral influence into the midst of world events in order to contribute directly to shaping the destiny of mankind.

Similarly, from an early era there has been dispute between those who believed that foreign policy should serve simple, clear, and definite goals of national interest and security, and those who believed it should serve the attainment of justice, freedom, and self-government throughout the world. Some thought of U.S. foreign policy in the traditional terms of national states and national interests, of prudent bargaining and astute diplomacy or of armed might, and eschewed ideological motifs. Others saw it as a matter of safeguarding democracy, or Western civilization, or world order and peace against the menace of Absolutism, Fascism, or Communism. This dispute also cut across the division between isolationists and interventionists, for sometimes and in certain cases the "realists" were isolationists, and at other times and in other cases they were interventionists. And the same was true of the "idealists" or "moralists" in foreign policy.

Beyond all these debates as to the ends of national policy there arose the vision of a world order transcending and replacing the system of national states; of a world state or a federal union of a pluralistic type, which would allow for various types of societies and polities. To the realists this was fantastical dream-stuff or an ideal model that belonged outside of history. Even to many of the idealists it seemed an impracticable solution that could not be applied in the foreseeable future and that was of no use to men and nations facing urgent problems in the actual world.

If the dream ever became reality, of course, it would mean the end of foreign policy and diplomacy, and this entire topic would then become a matter of archeological interest. It might, however, mean that the traditional operations in this realm would be replaced by internal politics and maneuvers in a congress of nations — as to some extent was already the case in the United Nations in the 1950s and 1960s.

War, as Karl von Clausewitz pointed out two centuries ago, is nothing but the ultimate, last step in foreign policy; wars occur when diplomats fail to do their job well enough. Hence the connection between a nation's foreign policy and its wars is always close. This is as true of America as it is of other countries, and it is therefore not surprising to find that the analysis in the present chapter is similar in many ways to that in Ch. 7: COMMON DEFENSE. The sections that follow below are arranged more or less in chronological order, although the analysis of certain issues — for example, the one between isolationism and interventionism — runs across the board or, more accurately, throughout our national history, from its beginnings to the present day. The reader will discover that much the same arrangement occurs in Ch. 7, and that many of the same topics are discussed there. A general cross reference to that chapter, therefore, instead of references to it at the end of particular sections of this chapter, is in order.

1. DEMOCRACY AND FOREIGN POLICY: WHO DECIDES?

"IT IS ESPECIALLY in the conduct of their foreign relations," Alexis de Tocqueville, the French visitor, remarked in 1835, "that democracies appear to me decidedly inferior to other governments." The conduct of foreign affairs, he maintained, requires secrecy, patience, and cool-headedness — the quali-

ties of an aristocracy. However, the Constitution had entrusted this function to the President and Senate, which tended "to detach the general foreign policy of the union from the direct control of the people." Moreover, Tocqueville noted, in this sphere "the President of the United States possesses almost royal prerogatives," although the isolated geopolitical situation of the nation at the time gave him no opportunity to exercise them.

The presence of aristocratic and monarchical elements in a system of popular government raised the possibility of conflict within the government and between the government and the people in matters of foreign policy. In the first place, the responsibility in this sphere was divided between the President and Congress, since the consent of two-thirds of the Senate was required in making treaties and foreign appointments, and the approval of both houses was required for declaring war and making military and diplomatic expenditures.

In 1793 James Madison challenged President George Washington's right to issue a Proclamation of Neutrality in the Franco-British conflict on the grounds that Congress alone is the proper judge of the national will and interest in matters of war and peace. Under the American system, he maintained, "the President and Senate *jointly,* not the President *alone,*" may make decisions on such things as neutrality once a war has commenced. The President had no right to commit the nation on so important a matter merely on the basis of "his *sense,* his *disposition,* and his *views* on the qnestion."

However, John Randolph, when opposing Thomas Jefferson's foreign policy in 1810, remarked that a President is so placed that he has a far more complete knowledge of foreign relations than any mere congressman and, moreover, has "an almost omnipotent control over our foreign affairs." And in 1848 Senator R. S. Baldwin of Connecticut questioned the right of the Senate to speak for the nation in any matter of foreign relations. "The people had confided to the President alone the trust of speaking in their name and behalf to foreign nations," he declared, and Congress enters in only where appointments or appropriations require its action.

Yet Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts insisted in 1870 that the Constitution requires the advice and consent of the Senate before the President can order any actions that are currently the subject of treaty negotiations. "The chief magistrate can pledge the national faith only according to the Constitution," he declared, and this requires the approval of two-thirds of the Senate for the provisions of a treaty to be legal, that is, a part of "the supreme law of the land."

Tocqueville had observed in 1835 that "it is chiefly in foreign relations that the executive power of a nation finds occasion to exert its skill and its strength," and that a prolonged foreign crisis or series of crises is bound to increase the President's importance and influence. Woodrow Wilson saw it the same way, writing as a student of American government in 1885 and again in 1908, before he himself became President. The role of Presidents during the first quarter century of the republic, he said, was preeminently "the adjustment of foreign relations . . . since theirs was the office of negotiation." When foreign affairs became important again after the war with Spain, he observed, the presidency recouped its lost stature and functions.

"When foreign affairs play a prominent part in the politics and policy of a nation," Wilson wrote in 1913, "its executive must of necessity be its guide: must utter every initial judgment, take every first step of action, supply the information upon which it

is to act, suggest and in large measure control its conduct."

In the face of the constitutional requirement to get congressional approval on important foreign policy actions, the Presidents have used various devices to exercise their controlling and decisive role. One is to make a treaty the subject of a joint resolution of Congress — requiring only a majority vote of both houses, instead of a two-thirds vote of the Senate — as President James Polk did in 1845 with the annexation of Texas. Another is to make treaties matters of executive agreements between the participating governments: "declarations" requiring no congressional approval, not even a mere majority. Since the Declaration of Lima in 1938, most important Pan-American arrangements have been of this type. The Declaration of the United Nations in 1942, which was a full-scale military alliance, was based on an arrangement between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and it was never submitted to the Senate for approval.

Another is the way of secret agreements, despite Tocqueville's notion that democracies could not do this and Wilson's conviction that they should not. During World War II, secret agreements, not revealed to Congress or to the people, were made between the American President, the British prime minister, and the Russian premier, notably at Yalta in 1945.

Moreover, in his role as commander in chief, responsible for the national defense and security, a President could not only make secret military arrangements but could also initiate hostilities without going to Congress for a declaration of war. In the case of Korea in the 1950s, President Harry S. Truman was able to dispatch troops into what turned out to be a major "minor" undeclared war without consulting Congress. The buildup in Vietnam in the 1960s from

Courtesy, Reg Manning, "The Arizona Republic"

"The problem: How d'you make sure the other fellow will lower his gun when you do?"; 1957

a few score "military advisers" to hundreds of thousands of troops in a grim, fierce, undeclared war was also a matter of executive action, with some show of seeking congressional approval, as in the Gulf of Tonkin incident in 1964.

Senators and others opposed to the secret arrangements and the undeclared wars charged that they were an illegal and unconstitutional exercise of executive authority, and called for a submission of these decisions to Congress or to the people. Similarly, opponents of America's entry into World Wars I and II, such as Senator Robert M. La Follette and Col. Charles A. Lindbergh, contended that the preponderant majority of the people would vote against going to war. But on the key occasions that tested attitudes, Congress and the people have usually supported presidential initiative and decision, presumably trusting the judgment of the elected chief magistrate as to the national interest and necessity, and not worrying about constitutional niceties. Popular revulsion against undeclared wars — for example, the Korean "police action" —

usually stemmed from a conviction that they involved too costly and futile sacrifices, not that they were unconstitutional exercises of presidential power.

Two major attempts to restrict the war-making and treaty-making powers of the national government occurred during the twentieth century. The first was the Ludlow Resolution in the 1930s for a constitutional amendment that would require a popular referendum on a declaration of war, except in case of invasion of the United States or its possessions. It was finally tabled in the House of Representatives in 1938 by a narrow margin, after President Roosevelt complained that "it would cripple any President in his conduct of our foreign relations" and encourage would-be violators of American rights.

The Bricker Amendment, proposed by Senator John W. Bricker of Ohio in 1953, would have restricted the scope of treaties to which the United States was a party, and would have required congressional approval of executive agreements. For the new President, Dwight Eisenhower, it was "a damn thorn in our side," since, according to his aide, Emmett John Hughes, "it would have virtually stripped the President of authority to make even routine executive agreements." It failed of the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate by one lone vote (sixty senators voted for it, thirty-one against it).

The foregoing may seem to give the impression that the people as such, or through their representatives in Congress and perhaps even in the state legislatures, do not and cannot play any significant part in the making of foreign policy. Admittedly, this sometimes seems to be so. But it also may be argued, and has been argued by Americans at various times, that the people are the carriers of the traditions with which the rest of this chapter deals, and that their willingness to uphold or to alter those traditions sets very important and quite narrow limits on what the official policy makers can do.

Three epochs in American history can be cited as examples of the people's power to influence foreign policy. Not accidentally, they were epochs when "great debates" on foreign policy occurred in the nation. The first of these was the debate over imperialism during the Spanish-American War, which grew all the hotter as American armed forces extended their victories from the Caribbean to the Pacific. If — it is a large if, and perhaps there is no real way to determine the facts of the matter — the majority of Americans was opposed around 1900 to our imperialist ventures in the Philippines and elsewhere in the Pacific, then it must be conceded that they failed to have their way. But it should also be pointed out that their dislike of foreign adventuring probably had an important effect a decade or so later, when it took the country longer to get into World War I than it might have if the Spanish-American War had not taken place.

The second great debate occurred in 1939 and 1940, when the question once again was whether the United States should become involved in what seemed to many Americans to be a local war in Europe. The fact that we finally did become involved should not disguise another fact, namely, that the President of the United States and many of his advisers wanted us to become involved much sooner than we did, and that our involvement finally occurred as the result of an attack on our possessions in Hawaii, not as the result of executive decisions and actions or of secret cabals.

The last great debate that requires mention here occurred in the 1960s, when the country suffered a division over the question of our involvement in Vietnam that was only comparable to the division during

the Mexican War, and perhaps even more severe. It was hard to tell just what the electorate really felt, even after the returns were in, and perhaps their feelings, even if these had been determinable with accuracy, should not have had any effect on a President's policies and actions in such a realm. But there were some, at least, who felt that a President could not continue a policy, even if he was convinced it was right, if more and more of his countrymen came to disagree with it.

The opposing argument — that the executive branch of the federal government is practically autonomous in foreign policy, partly because it knows more about the situations in which foreign policy must be made and partly because modern technology gives the President unprecedented powers to start and perhaps even to finish wars with "the push of a button" — has a great deal of weight. Nevertheless, in a nation that elects its Presidents every four years, the people also have their say. Abraham Lincoln put it with homely eloquence more than a century ago when he remarked that you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

Courtesy, Herblock, "The Washington Post," 1964

"Absolutely! We should stay out of foreign affairs and we should make other countries do as we say"

2. ISOLATIONISM, NEUTRALISM, AND UNILATERALISM

OTHER NATIONS HAVE PURSUED isolationist and neutralist policies in their foreign relations at certain times, but in no other great power has it been so central and revered a position in foreign policy over almost the whole of the nation's history. In the United States, isolation not only has been considered as a lucky geopolitical circumstance or condition that must be taken advantage of and maintained for the sake of the national interest and security. It also and especially has been considered as an evidence of America's superiority to other regions and peoples, of its providential mission to provide an example of peace and happiness to mankind — of a nation free from the broils and carnage of the Old World.

It was Tom Paine, in 1776, who first clearly stated the isolationist policy for the nation still not born, seeing in it one of the principal reasons for making a declaration of independence from Great Britain. "Because," he argued, "any submission to or dependence on Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels . . . it is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she can never do, while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics."

Twenty years after Paine urged this policy upon the American people, George Washington, the first President of the new republic, made it the central message of his Farewell Address, which soon became the canonical text of American isolationism.

Washington advised the new nation, in its relations with the European nations, to remain friendly and polite to all, but not too deeply or permanently involved with any — that is, "steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world." The reason was that "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation," and its controversies and causes "are essentially foreign to our concerns." Moreover, America's "detached and distant situation" made it physically possible for it to pursue its special interests and concerns without becoming involved "in the toils of European ambition, rivalship, interest, humor, or caprice."

Jefferson urged basically the same policy in his First Inaugural Address in 1801. "Kindly separated by nature and a wide ocean from the exterminating havoc of one-quarter of the globe," he declared, the new nation was able to follow a policy of "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none." Moreover, he declared that the United States was "the world's best hope," and "too high-minded to endure the degradations" of the other parts of the world.

From the first, however, it was realized that the neutral stance, which was essential to the isolationist position, was not an easy one to maintain. It depended not only on geographical conditions but on the thoughts and emotions of the American people, many of whom favored either France or England in their conflict. Indeed, this division of sentiment created a problem in national unity, as well as neutrality, and Washington's address was deeply concerned with both problems. For the sake of the national interest, security, peace, and freedom, Washington appealed to his countrymen to eschew "permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others."

Washington knew from his own experience as President the dangers of which he spoke. When, in 1793, he issued a Proclamation of Neutrality with regard to Great Britain and her allies on the one hand and France on the other, he endangered his unique prestige and special place in the hearts of his countrymen. He and his policy were subjected to angry attacks by the pro-French party, who, according to Tocqueville, made up a majority of the people, and who regarded neutrality as somehow immoral. "The cause of France is the cause of man," Hugh Henry Brackenridge declared in a public letter to Washington, "and neutrality is desertion."

John Quincy Adams, looking back in 1825, saw the twenty-five years up to 1815 as a "time of trial," during which relations with Europe had been "the principal basis of our political divisions" and there had been "dangerous attachments to one foreign nation and antipathies against another," culminating in the War of 1812-1815. Since then, new conditions in Europe and a ten-year period of international peace had made it possible for the United States to become a united people, ready once again to pursue an independent, neutral policy in world affairs.

Adams was a prime architect of that policy, as secretary of state in the Monroe administration (1817-1825). Indeed, so wedded was he to the principles of neutrality and nonintervention that he opposed supporting even the independence movements in Latin America against European monarchical rule. In 1821 he declared that "it was our true policy and duty to take no part in the contest," and that "the principle of neutrality to *all* foreign wars was . . . fundamental to the continuance of our liberties and of our Union." The American people should not indulge their special sympathy for nations struggling for "civil liberty and national independence," he cautioned in

1823 (the year of the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine), to the extent that they violate "the duties of neutrality," and risk involvement "in foreign wars." "She goes not abroad in search of monsters to destroy," Adams had said of the United States in his Independence Day Address of 1821. "She is the champion and vindicator only of her own freedom and independence."

The Greek struggle for independence against the Turks in the 1820s provided the occasion for a classic debate between American interventionists and isolationists. Daniel Webster, John C. Calhoun, and other eminent statesmen urged aid to the Greeks against "Tartarian barbarism" as a moral duty of the United States. Adams and John Randolph, on the contrary, denounced this appeal as emotional crusading that risked disastrous conflicts with European powers, and instead urged retention of the traditional policy of noninvolvement in foreign conflicts.

Another confrontation between neutralists and interventionists came with the mid-century wave of democratic revolutions and national independence movements throughout Europe. The revolt of the Hungarians against Austrian rule in 1849 led to a burst of enthusiastic support and identification by Americans, to be matched only a century later when the same people revolted against Soviet hegemony. (Russian troops repressed the Hungarian uprisings on both occasions.) However, in 1852, President Millard Fillmore declared that the principle of self-determination required that the United States not interfere in the internal affairs of other nations, wherever its sympathies might lie, and Henry Clay, speaking as "a dying man" to the great Hungarian freedom leader Louis Kossuth, in the same year, declared that the United States could do far more for Hungary and the cause of freedom by serving as an example of happiness and peace than by intervening in foreign wars, even wars for freedom.

When the United States expanded into the Caribbean and Pacific at the end of the nineteenth century and began to feel its oats as a world power, the doctrine of neutral isolationism was vigorously challenged as outmoded and hampering. In 1898 Henry Cabot Lodge saw the war with Spain as requiring a jump from "our home-staying policy of yesterday" to a confrontation "with worldwide forces in Asia as well as in Europe." Old "schemes of national policy," even when they were laid down in revered farewell addresses, he declared, could not determine action and reaction now.

Similarly, Alfred Thayer Mahan, surveying the results of the war, held in 1900 that the new conditions required a more flexible attitude toward involvement abroad. In a world where all nations "touch one another more closely than of old," and where changes in power balances could affect America's position in the world, he maintained, national interest and duty may require a departure from a policy of neutrality even in European affairs.

Against these arguments, men like William Jennings Bryan maintained the old isolationist position that America had become great in the world — "a world power" — precisely by governing itself well and not imposing rule over other peoples. Isolationists like Senator Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin opposed America's entry into World War I on the grounds that it violated the traditional doctrines of neutrality and noninterference in foreign conflicts laid down by Jefferson and others in the early national period. After the war, isolationists opposed joining the League of Nations on the same grounds. Senator William E. Borah of Idaho castigated the new entanglement "with all European concerns" and called for a "return to the faith of the fathers," so that America could once more

Courtesy, Hugh Nation, "The Philadelphia Inquirer"
"The Devil and Daniel Webster," 1945

"live her own life" and thus "continue her mission in the cause of peace, of freedom, and of civilization."

In 1939, at a time when Germany, Italy, and Japan were engaging in aggressive expansion in Europe, Africa, and Asia, the eminent historian Charles A. Beard voiced an almost identical viewpoint. These drives, he contended, posed no threat to U.S. interests and security and should be met by the traditional policy of noninterference and noninvolvement in extracontinental affairs, where "our interests are remote and our power to enforce our will is relatively slight. . . . The destiny of Europe and Asia has not been committed, under God, to the keeping of the United States, and it was a grandiose delusion to suppose that Providence has appointed us His chosen people for the pacification of the earth." The non-interventionists "propose to deal with the world . . . in American terms, that is, in terms of national interest and security on this continent," and to apply their energies to the building of a better American life. "America is not to be Rome or Britain," he said. "It is to be America."

After World War II, despite the involvement of the United States in the United Nations and in regional military assistance pacts in Europe and Asia, the isolationist protest still continued. However, in the new world-historical situation it often took on a new note of unilateralism, of "going it alone" wherever national (including imperial) interests demanded.

For example, in 1951 Joseph P. Kennedy, a man of wide experience in national and international affairs, called for a policy of "disentanglement" to assure America's military and economic security against the Soviet threat. The system of postwar alliances had made the United States vulnerable all over the world, and "delegated to others the power to determine our own fate," at points where U.S. power could not be decisively effective. The United States, he counseled, should concentrate on its national, continental, and hemispheric resources, in the interests of a shorter, more defensible "perimeter of self-sufficiency," and "disentangle" itself from its recent "far-flung commitments."

However, his son John F. Kennedy, speaking as President of the United States ten years later, declared that the good old days were gone forever, "when our isolation was guarded by two oceans," and "gone with them are the old policies and the old complacencies." The United States now found itself committed "to defend the frontiers of freedom," in West Berlin, Korea, and Vietnam because of its vital interests as well as ideological loyalties. "We find ourselves unable to escape the responsibilities of freedom," he said, and on a

worldwide scale. Yet he insisted that this power be exercised with prudence and restraint, and disavowed the grandiose claim that the United States would or could "right every wrong" at every place and in every time.

The opposition of men like Walter Lippmann, political scientist Hans Morgenthau, and Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas to American involvement in Southeast Asia in the 1960s once more brought the charge of "neo-isolationism" from defenders of that policy. "The basic premise of the new isolationism," charged Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut in 1965, "is that the United States is overextended in its attempt to resist Communist aggression around the world, overcommitted to the defense of distant outposts, and overinvolved in the murky and unintelligible affairs of remote areas." Dodd contended that more, rather than less, had to be done in the defense of "freedom and national independence" — old words recurring again — everywhere in the world, in order to preserve the United States and its freedom, and that the fate of Southeast Asia and other remote areas depended vitally on American will and effort.

Those labeled "neo-isolationists" retorted that they did support the use of American military and political power in outlying places, when the situation called for it; but they insisted that this power had certain definite limits, could be exercised effectively only if it served clearly defined national interests, and should not be committed to global moral crusades. They called for a reconsideration of ends and means in U.S. foreign policy.

This new confrontation of interventionists and noninterventionists — of "hawks" and "doves" — occasioned the most divisive split in foreign policy since the Mexican War in the 1840s. [For a somewhat different treatment of some of the matters discussed here, see Ch. 1: NATIONAL CHARACTER.]

3. THE UNITED STATES IN NORTH AMERICA: CONTINENTAL EXPANSIONISM

AFTER THE UNITED STATES won its independence, France, Great Britain, Spain, and Russia still held vast amounts of territory in the New World, much of it directly contiguous to the new republic. The extension of the United States into the North American lands then possessed by European powers seemed only natural to the Americans who argued for it — a matter of natural right, geographical predestination, national security, economic neeessity, or "extending the area of freedom," as Andrew Jackson was to call it in 1843. American opponents of expansion, however, objected that it violated moral, legal, or constitutional principles — including the right of other peoples to self-determination — or was unwise politically, spreading the new nation too thin and thus doing a disservice to the cause of republican government. Foreign policy officials of the European powers usually regarded American expansion as menacing their own national and imperial interests.

Conflict with European powers over their American territories arose as early as 1800, when Spain ceded to France the immense Louisiana Territory, stretching from the Mississippi to the Rockies. President Jefferson was so alarmed at the threat posed to American use of New Orleans and the Mississippi by Napoleonic France that he foresaw the need for an alliance with England in a war against France, which would now become America's "natural and habitual enemy." Fortunately Napoleon agreed to cede the whole Louisiana Territory, thus doubling the national territory, at a cost of about three cents an acre, and the eager Jefferson completed the transaction in 1803 by

executive action alone, without waiting for congressional approval.

American annexation of British Canada was one of the aims of the War of 1812. Congressman Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky in 1811 urged "the expulsion of Great Britain from her dominions in North America." However, this aim failed of fulfillment, and Canada and other British territories in North America remained British. Indeed the peaceful, unarmed border with Canada later became one of the staple boasts of American political oratory, and was held up as a model to the rest of the world.

John Quincy Adams declared in a Cabinet meeting in 1819 that the new nation's "proper dominion" was "the continent of North America," and that "the United States and North America are identical." In 1821 he told the British minister to Washington, Stratford Canning, that the United States had no intention of encroaching on Britain's "northern provinces on this continent," but warned him to "leave the rest of the continent to us," including the parts held by Russia and Spain.

Adams' forceful diplomacy and other political and military factors soon brought Spain to renounce its claims to the Floridas and also to the Pacific Northwest region — the Oregon Territory. He also induced Russia to give up its claims to that area and to accept the 54° 40′ parallel as the southern boundary of its North American possessions. This left the conflict over Oregon as one solely between the United States and its old antagonist Great Britain, both of which claimed the territory from the Columbia River north to the 49th parallel. Extreme American expansionists claimed everything up to Russian Alaska, and urged "Fifty-four forty or fight," but moderate counsels won the day, and through diplomatic negotiations the boundary was set at the 49th parallel, where it remains to this day.

The next great surge of American expansionism came with the annexation of Texas in 1845, occasioning a war with one of the newly independent American nations, Mexico, and a conflict of interest with England and France. The latter desired to keep Texas as an independent state in order to provide a buffer to further American expansion as well as a desirable source of cotton and of markets for their goods. This foreign "interference" and the possibility of "encirclement" by the European powers made the United States all the more eager to annex Texas, which was finally accomplished in 1845 by a joint resolution of Congress admitting Texas as a state. The dispute with Mexico over Texas' western boundary then became a matter of U.S. concern and led to the Mexican War of 1846-1848 and to the acquisition of Mexico's vast territories between Texas and the Pacific.

Many people at the time disapproved of the Mexican War, and many historians have disapproved of it since, but this opinion is by no means unanimous. The eminent twentieth-century diplomatic historian Samuel F. Bemis argued that the United States had acted properly and prudently in annexing Texas and in the later dispute with Mexico. And he added that "it would be well-nigh impossible today [1936] to find a citizen of the United States who would desire to undo President Polk's diplomacy, President Polk's war, and the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, negotiated by President Polk's disobedient chief clerk of the Department of State."

The last considerable addition of territory on the North American continent — this time noncontiguous — came with the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. Many critics opposed it as a waste of millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money on worthless Arctic real estate — "Seward's Folly" — or as an unprecedented and undesirable acquisition of noncontiguous territory. Others hailed it as a step on the way to the

long-desired continental empire dreamed of by Adams and others, stretching from the Isthmus of Panama to "the frozen sea." It was not realized at the time that the acquisition — including the Aleutian Islands — put the United States within military striking distance of Russian Siberia, and of the Kamchatka Peninsula and the northernmost Japanese islands. The purchase provided the first bastion in what was to be the Pacific defense perimeter of the United States in the next century.

Henry Cabot Lodge, looking back in 1895 at this "record of conquest, colonization, and territorial expansion, unequaled by any people in the nineteenth century," maintained that it was a fulfillment of Washington's advice to stay out of foreign affairs and regions and concentrate on the American sphere. Forswearing any further southern expansion, Lodge insisted that "from the Rio Grande to the Arctic Ocean there should be but one flag and one country. Neither race nor climate forbids this extension, and every consideration of national growth and national welfare demands it." The modern tendency, he argued, was toward supernations, "a movement which makes for civilization and the advancement of the race." Thus American national expansion, in this view, was good for all mankind. [For further discussion of some of the matters treated here, see Ch. 2: FRONTIER.]

4. THE UNITED STATES IN LATIN AMERICA: HEGEMONY OR MUTUALITY?

ALEXANDER HAMILTON sketched the basic plan of U.S. hemispheric policy in the *Federalist* papers, long before any other independent American nations existed. He saw the world divided into four parts or "systems" — Europe, Africa, Asia, and America — each with its "distinct set of interests." The goal of the United States, he urged, should be to acquire "an ascendant in the system of American affairs," and to make the American system so strong that it could be "superior to the control of all transatlantic force or influence, and able to dictate the terms of the connection between the Old and the New World."

Jefferson, writing in 1813 at a time when Spain's colonies had begun their struggle for independence, clearly understood the special American system to include the whole hemisphere — North and South. Whatever form the governments of the new Latin-American nations might take, he insisted, "they will be *American* governments, no longer to be involved in the never-ceasing broils of Europe." Furthermore, he urged a decade later, Europe should never be allowed to interfere in American hemispheric affairs.

Thus the basic principles of isolation and nonentanglement were extended to the whole naturally "insulated" hemisphere. This notion of an extended hemispheric independence from Europe was tested and developed during the revolts of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies and dependencies (1808-1824), which occasioned the pronouncement of basic principles of U.S. foreign policy. For example, John Quincy Adams, the prime molder of foreign policy during this critical period, declared for strict neutrality and nonintervention in the new wars of independence, just as in international conflicts. He also maintained that the United States had the right to recognize any new nation that had clearly established an independent, actual *(de facto)* government, laying down a basic principle of U.S. foreign policy that has gone largely unchallenged ever since.

Furthermore, Adams met the opposition of the Holy Alliance of European monarchical regimes to the new Latin-American nations, as well as the threat of Russian and British expansion on the Northwest Coast, by the assertion of U.S. opposition to any new colonization in America. He applied the "no transfer" principle, first enunciated

Library of Congress

"No other arm around this waist"; pen and ink drawing by W. A. Rogers, 1900

by Congress in 1811 in regard to Florida, to Spain's possessions in Cuba and Puerto Rico, when it seemed Spain might transfer them to Great Britain. *Old* colonization was not to be disturbed — indeed, the United States would not interfere even if Spain tried to regain its old colonies by force — but *new* colonization was to be opposed.

These various elements of Adams' hemispheric policy were finally united in the Monroe Doctrine, the second canonical text of U.S. foreign policy (the first being Washington's Farewell Address). In essence, the Doctrine proclaimed that European powers should stay out of American hemispheric affairs, and promised that the United States would stay out of European affairs. Conspicuously missing from the declaration was the corresponding announcement by the United States that it disavowed any acquisitions for itself of any of the former Spanish dependencies. Adams opposed any pledge that might prevent the future annexation of Texas and Cuba and other "natural appendages to the North American continent," which he hoped would eventually be incorporated into the United States.

Thus the notion of "hemispheric" interests and security had an ambiguous or double meaning. It could mean the defense of the hemisphere against European aggression or interference, in the interest of all the American powers. It could also mean the pursuit by the United States of what it considered its own "natural," military, and commercial interests in the hemisphere — even when these conflicted with the interests and desires of other American nations — to secure, in Hamilton's words, "an ascendant in the system of American affairs."

Critics, both domestic and foreign, were quick to give the latter interpretation to U.S. application of the Doctrine. If Texas were annexed, William Ellery Channing said in 1837, the European powers could only interpret the Doctrine as a means of driving away "the older vultures" so that the new ones could grow fat. Indeed, France and England (which had originally suggested the proclamation of the Doctrine) claimed that expansion was upsetting the "balance of power" in North America. President Polk declared in 1845 that the Monroe Doctrine meant that European powers had no right to question the incorporation of neighboring nations into the United States or to use the "balance of power" doctrine to check its expansion.

Many spokesmen were to concur in the interpretation that the doctrine both prohibited European intervention and protected U.S. intervention in the Western Hemisphere. Orestes Brownson declared in 1866 that the Monroe Doctrine pointed to the "destiny" of the United States to overspread the North American continent and even the whole Western Hemisphere. President Ulysses S. Grant argued in 1870 that

"the acquisition of San Domingo is an adherence to the Monroe Doctrine."

The notion of U.S. hegemony in the Western Hemisphere — that the United States was the controlling power in the area — also became connected with application of the Doctrine. In the Venezuela dispute with England in 1895, Secretary of State Richard Olney declared that the fiat of the United States was law "on this continent." This view sanctioned armed intervention by the United States in Latin-American nations that were adjudged unstable, politically or financially, as later proclaimed in the [Theodore] Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in 1904 and 1905. President Roosevelt argued that the Doctrine made the United States the steward of stable government and sound finance in the Latin-American nations. Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson in 1931 defended the long record of U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean islands on the grounds that it was made necessary by the vital strategic importance of these areas and their chronic political and financial instability — although admittedly this contravened the basic international law principle of the equal rights of all nations that was also assumed in the Monroe Doctrine.

The distinguished Mexican diplomat and political scientist Luis Quintanilla wrote a slashing critique of the Monroe Doctrine and its "corollaries" in 1943. The doctrine, he said, had been unilateral — pronounced, interpreted, and applied by the United States alone for its own interest and security. Moreover, it had been *perverted* from an original declaration against European imperialism to a sanction for U.S. imperialism. No real inter-American order was possible, Quintanilla declared, as long as the United States maintained this unilateral assertion of hegemony and responsibility over a hemispheric domain, resting "on the arbitrary decision of one self-appointed 'leader.'"

He acknowledged, however, that the Good Neighbor Policy of Franklin D. Roosevelt represented a significant step toward mutuality — from "Monroeist Pan-Americanism" to "democratic Pan-Americanism." Through a series of Pan-American conferences beginning at Montevideo in 1933, the United States agreed to a mutual, multilateral responsibility in hemispheric affairs with the other American nations, renounced the policy of unilateral interference of the first Roosevelt, and pledged itself not to intervene in the affairs (internal or external) of any American nation. As far as non-American nations were concerned, Franklin Roosevelt's emphasis was on the "mutual defense" of "our neighborhood," or "the solidarity of the hemisphere," and on the whole Pan-American group of nations as an example of unity and peace to divided Europe.

John F. Kennedy's proclamation of the Alliance for Progress in 1961 marked a new step on the road to hemispheric mutuality. He called for a mutual effort, to which the Latin-American countries were to bring their determination, resources, and energies, and the United States its financial and technical assistance, to raise the economic and cultural levels of the Latin-American peoples. Kennedy constantly emphasized the *common* history, heritage, and civilization of the American countries, North and South, citing Simon Bolívar and Benito Juarez, not James Monroe or John Quincy Adams, on hemispheric destiny. He spoke of "our hemispheric mission" and "our own people" collectively for all the American nations. He hailed the great "task of creating an American civilization . . . where, within the rich diversity of its own traditions, each nation is free to follow its own path toward progress."

At the same time Kennedy noted a cloud on the horizon, menacing the Americas from without and from within, and he

Courtesy, Herblock, "The Washington Post"

"Para el Progresso, si! Already I've written to Washington for folders on the new models," 1962

sounded the alarm as previous Presidents had done in regard to the Holy Alliance and the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. This time it was the specter of Communism in Cuba — "ninety miles off our shores," as he had said during the election campaign of 1960. Just one month after President Kennedy's proposal of the Alliance for Progress, the abortive invasion of the Bay of Pigs in Cuba — by Cuban exiles, trained and equipped by U.S. government agencies — cast doubt on the sincerity of the professions and commitments of noninterference in the internal and external affairs of the Latin-American states.

However, a meeting of foreign ministers of the American nations unanimously agreed, at Punta del Este, that Communist Cuba posed "an active threat to the security of the hemisphere and not merely a matter of ideological incompatibility." A joint resolution of the U.S. Congress in 1961 cited the Monroe Doctrine, the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Resistance (The Rio Treaty) of 1947, and the Punta del Este Declaration as justification to use any means whatsoever, "including the use of arms," to frustrate the allegedly aggressive and subversive designs of Cuba on hemispheric nations.

In October 1962 the buildup of Soviet ballistic missiles in Cuba resulted in the most dangerous crisis of the Cold War, bringing the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. to the verge of nuclear conflict. In his confrontation with Premier Nikita Khrushchev, President Kennedy had the support of a resolution of the Council of the Organization of American States, which, together with the joint resolution of Congress, he took as authorization for his crucial action — following the expressed will of the OAS and of Congress. The outcome, after Russia backed down, was an easing of tensions between the two great nuclear powers and the relegation of Cuba to a long-term problem to be approached through diplomatic and economic action, and somehow to be lived with. This time it had been a small Latin-American nation that had come close to detonating a third world war, and this time the United States had been influenced, to some extent at least, by the wishes of the other American nations.

Incidents in Panama and in the Dominican Republic during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration showed that interventionism and even a practical unilateralism had by no means ceased in Latin-American policy. In the Dominican Republic, the United States resorted to armed intervention by the Marine Corps in a style long familiar in response to a reported threat of a Communist take-over of the nation, which later turned out to be considerably exaggerated. Some U.S. troops were removed and joined by forces from other OAS powers, and an election was held to allow the people to choose their own government.

However, bitter criticism of the action by Senator Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and others raised the question of whether, or how far, the United States should allow neighboring nations to embrace noncapitalistic forms of society. For some who advocated a "hard" policy, the criterion for intervention, in one form or another, was not "ideological" — whether a nation was socialist or Communist — but "strategic" — whether it was tied to the Soviet or Chinese Communist blocs and whether it presented an actual military threat. [For another treatment of some of the matters discussed here, see Ch. 25: AMERICAN DESTINY.]

5. THE UNITED STATES IN EUROPE: INTERVENTION AND CONTAINMENT

THE UNITED STATES was involved early in its history in the wars between France and England or other European powers. The undeclared naval war between the United States and France from 1798 to 1800, and the War of 1812 against England, were the American phases of European conflicts — the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., in 1949, drew up a table of "America's World Wars, 1689-1945," listing *nine* world wars (wars involving all or most of the great powers of the time) in which America had participated in its colonial and national eras. If cold wars count, then we might add that between the Communist and non-Communist powers, which was heating up at the time Schlesinger wrote, as a tenth world war involving the United States.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this list is what it shows only indirectly — the century-long gap between the Napoleonic Wars and World War I. These were not only a hundred years of relative peace in Europe — no general wars of the giant coalitions of powers — but also of noninvolvement of the United States in Europe's minor wars and disturbances during the period. This time of isolation from European conflicts was not owing to the wisdom and prudence of American foreign policy, in the view of many commentators, but simply to the absence of opportunity, temptation, or necessity. "It was neither American intent nor American interest, but the European balance of power," historian Norman Graebner wrote, "that preserved American isolation." Many twentieth-century interpreters also attributed to the British Navy the insulation of America from Europe's politics, conflicts, and predatoriness.

The European balance of power was regarded quite early as a matter affecting U.S. interests. Jefferson, "with a view to our own interests only," wished to limit British sea power and French land power and balance them off against each other. Napoleon's conquest of Russia, Jefferson warned in 1814, would "lay thus at his feet the whole continent of Europe. This done, England would be but a breakfast . . . and he might spare such a force to be sent in British ships [against America] as I would as leave not have to encounter." However, he wanted Napoleon to have a certain measure of success in order to wear down the maritime power of England and to exclude "England from the whole continent of Europe."

The emergence of the Holy Alliance of antirevolutionary powers after the fall of Napoleon raised anew the question of U.S. relations with Europe. In fact, Russia, the largest and most powerful of the Holy Allies, invited the United States to become a formal party to the Alliance, an invitation that John Quincy Adams diplomatically declined on the grounds of "the irreconcilability of the European and American political systems." The United States was also careful, as we have seen, to avoid intervention in the conflicts between the revolutionary

and counterrevolutionary movements in Europe in the 1820s and 1840s.

The federal government naturally demanded similar nonintervention in the civil conflict of 1861-1865 from the European powers, some of whom, notably England and France, were sympathetic with the Confederate cause, in their own political, economic, and strategic interests. American diplomacy, British realization of the heavy economic and military price of war with the United States, and the heroic support of the British textile workers for the Union cause — despite the terrible suffering and unemployment caused by the Union blockade of Southern cotton — prevented European intervention or mediation in the conflict. As the major naval power in the area of hostilities, the United States claimed rights and privileges against neutral shipping that it had always opposed and that it was to oppose again.

In 1898, a war with a European power — Spain — over its rule of a Caribbean dependency resulted in making the United States a colonial power in the Western Pacific and engaged it in the worldwide balance — or disbalance — of power. "The first foreign war that we have had since we became firmly established as a nation," Walter Hines Page wrote in 1898, had brought Americans "face to face with worldwide forces in Asia as well as in Europe." The new situation, Alfred Thayer Mahan declared in 1899, called for new attitudes and policies by the United States toward the external world — both in Europe and Asia — involving types of territorial occupation and political and military action that had previously been regarded as unthinkable.

Mahan, despite his interest in Asia as the major scene of the American exercise of power, already saw in 1900 the possibility that the United States might become involved militarily if a major shift in the European balance of power were threatened. Indeed, it was in Europe and not in Asia that the nation first engaged as a full-grown power in a great world war, on distant battlefields. In 1917 it joined its major Far Eastern rivals, Russia and Japan, in a war on the side of England and France against the German-led alliance of the Central European Powers.

The underlying reason for this unprecedented action, according to the "realist" interpretation, was maintenance of the European balance of power and the British naval buffer in the Atlantic. But it was immediately occasioned by an avowed struggle for neutral rights by the United States, on the model of the infant isolated nation of a hundred years before. Moreover, the national leader who finally called the nation to become involved "at Armageddon" denounced all previous ideas of national interest and of the balance of power for a purely moral and idealistic view of foreign policy. A few months before he decided on war, Woodrow Wilson asked for a peace without victory -- "not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace."

When he called for a declaration of war, Wilson did so in the name of the rights of all mankind, of world peace, and of human freedom. No less than his isolationist opponents, he saw the United States as a good and purely motivated nation, removed from the chicanery and duplicity of the European states under their traditional leaders. But, unlike the isolationists, he proposed to carry the American way — including the Monroe Doctrine — out into the world, to release the peoples from the evil and vanity of their leaders, "to make the world safe for democracy."

Wilson's opponents, such as Senators La Follette and George W. Norris, and later "revisionist" historians charged him with having pursued a one-sided neutrality poli-

cy, weighted in favor of the Allies, or with having been motivated by the heavy economic involvement of U.S. industry and finance in the Allied cause. Critics of these critics have replied that the nation that originally thought it could maintain an aloof and disinterested attitude in Europe's wars found itself more and more involved — sentimentally, economically, and strategically — and ultimately compelled by circumstances and interest to come in on the Allied side. There is some evidence that Wilson and his aides, Col. Edward House and Robert Lansing, calculated the power realities involved as early as 1915 and 1916, and saw the national interest in preventing a British defeat — preferably by a negotiated peace.

In the end, the United States entered the war and demonstrated its power to bring about a peace *with victory* — a complete military victory that overturned the enemy "absolutist" regimes and left the victors apparently free to create a new Europe and a new world. The result was the Versailles Treaty, which soon became the object of heated criticism, not only in the defeated countries but also in the victor nations. Among the latter it was attacked for contradictory reasons: for being too idealistic or too cynical, for being too soft or too hard, for preserving or breaking the old balance of power, for allowing too much or not enough self-determination of peoples. Some victor-country critics, especially the "logical" and dangerously exposed French, criticized it as being confused and contradictory, as too mild for its harshness, or as an unmixable mixture of Wilsonian moral idealism and Napoleonic practical realism. Many commentators were to agree later that it was a major cause of World War II, but again for contradictory reasons.

In any case, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty, and this nation withdrew into isolationism — an act of blind folly or a return to sound policy, according to the varying points of view. It refused to join the new international bodies fathered by Wilson — the League of Nations and the World Court — and abstained from any political or military action in the "mess" of postwar Europe. In the 1930s, Congress enacted legislation intended to prevent the country's being drawn into future foreign wars through the business or travel activities of U.S. citizens. It did this in the face of the resurgence of Germany under Hitler and the emergence of a German-Italian entente of Fascist antidemocratic powers. In 1937 it passed a special neutrality law to apply to the single case of the Spanish Civil War, departing from the established precedents of international law in order to avoid involvement in the conflict between the Popular Front government of democrats, socialists, and Communists, and the military, Catholic, and Fascist rebels.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had originally countenanced this legislation and was markedly isolationist in his first term, turned in 1937, at a time of German, Italian, and Japanese expansion, to call for a "quarantine of the aggressors" against the small minority of nations that were threatening "the peace, the freedom, and the security of 90 percent of the population of the world." Despite a widespread isolationist temper and disinclination to become involved in a European war, the nation gradually drew closer to active support of England and France in the Second World War. An intense debate ensued between the isolationist and interventionist camps. An unneutral sympathy for the Anglo-French Allies and hostility to Nazi Germany grew, increasing intensely when France fell and the conquest of Britain became an imminent possibility.

When war came, it originated in the Pacific area, to the surprise of a nation with

its eyes on the European struggle. The Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis had made real the combined Pacific-Atlantic balance of power foreseen at the turn of the century by men like Mahan. It was Japan — patronized, frustrated, and opposed by the United States for the past generation in its efforts to attain territorial, strategic, and economic prizes in the Far East — that launched the blow at Hawaii and the Philippines feared by the "worriers" of 1898-1900. As for the Western Hemisphere, the Good Neighbor Policy paid off, as demonstrated in the Rio de Janiero Conference (1942) and the Act of Chapultepec in 1945, whereby almost all the Latin-American powers joined the United States in the war against the Axis.

From the diplomatic side, the war was highlighted by personal conferences between the effective "monarchs" of war and foreign policy in the major Allied powers. President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill, and Premier Stalin discussed war strategy and peace settlements at face-to-face meetings in remote and romantic places, such as Teheran and Yalta; and Truman, Clement Attlee, and Stalin made the final decisions on the war and the coming peace at Potsdam. In a remarkable historical turnabout, the U.S. Congress, in 1943, approved the Fulbright-Connally Resolution committing the nation to join an international organization "with power to prevent aggression and to preserve the peace of the world." This resolve was consummated in 1945 at the conference in San Francisco establishing the United Nations.

There was nearly complete bipartisan support for these moves toward international cooperation, and an apparent agreement between Anglo-American powers and the Soviet Union boded well for world peace and order at the end of the war. "We really believed in our hearts that this was the dawn of the new day we had all been praying for and talking about for so many years," Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's intimate aide, confessed. But the "supreme exultation" that the U.S. delegation felt, according to Hopkins, at the close of the Yalta Conference in 1945 was short-lived; and the secret decisions of that conference were to be a major cause of dispute in foreign policy discussions after the war.

Later critics of U.S. foreign policy during World War II attributed to the Yalta agreements, or their violation, the Soviet Union's postwar expansion and the seeds of the Cold War. Concessions were made to the U.S.S.R. in the Far East and Eastern Europe in return for its agreement to enter the war against Japan and to establish freely elected democratic governments in the liberated countries of Eastern Europe. However, Russia proceeded to secure Communist or other sympathetic governments in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Rumania — countries liberated and occupied by the Red Army — and later extended its political hegemony to Czechoslovakia and other nations. The Soviets moved to obtain a position of dominance in Eastern Europe and the Balkans that they thought necessary for their national interests and security.

Later political critics of the Yalta agreements pointed to these results as evidence of criminal folly or treason on the part of the American negotiators. But even so vigorous a critic of Yalta as the "realist" Hans Morgenthau conceded that by the time of Yalta the Red Army had penetrated too far for agreements (or violations) to make any difference. He maintained that "the traditional American national interest in the maintenance of the European balance of power" should have led the United States to take steps beforehand to protect the disputed area from domination by the Soviet Union. However, other American commentators, such as Henry Wallace, maintained that the region should be regarded as a Soviet sphere of influence, vital to Russia's interest but not to America's, and hence not a reasonable cause for discord or conflict.

In any case, the dispute and discord continued and resulted in a major pronouncement in the history of U.S. foreign policy, the Truman Doctrine of 1947. Occasioned by the threat of a Soviet take-over in the Middle East, Greece, and Turkey, it expressed officially the basic policy of the "containment" of Communist aggression, which was to be the stand of the United States both in Europe and Asia during the postwar decades. "It must be the policy of the United States," Truman declared, "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. . . . The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms." National security as well as the cause of world peace, he insisted, demanded such a policy.

Truman's rhetoric gave this commitment a global range, but George Kennan, the Foreign Service official who gave the policy its label "containment," phrased it more circumspectly as "that of a long-term, patient, but firm and vigilant, containment of Russian expansive tendencies." His emphasis was on the containment of the Soviet Union, not communism, and in Europe, not the whole world.

The Marshall Plan, broached in 1947 and begun in 1948, was designed to implement this policy by strengthening the economies of the recently liberated Western countries, so as to present a buffer of strong, self-governing nations in the path of Soviet expansion. It was labeled by its critics as a futile WPA project on an international scale, but it was defended by Secretary of State George Marshall as a practical way to prevent international war and universal conquest by one nation or ideology. To this economic defense was added the military defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in 1949 among twelve Atlantic powers, including the United States, "for the peace and security" of the North Atlantic area.

Drawing by Alan Dunn; © 1947 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

"Oh, dear, I'd really be enjoying all this if it weren't for Russia"

An especially intimate relationship developed between the United States and the western half of its former, now divided, foe, Germany. West Germany, a key economic and strategic prize in the postwar scramble, became almost a U.S. dependency. American airmen participated in a dramatic peacetime airlift to Soviet-blockaded Berlin in 1948, and a U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, in 1961 declared to an enthusiastic Berlin audience: *"Ich bin ein Berliner"* ("I am a Berliner"). By that time, however, Western Europe was moving toward an association centered on European interests and leadership; France, under President de Gaulle, presented the most emphatic case of independence from American guiding strings. On the other hand, the United States and the Soviet Union seemed to be approaching a détente, if not an entente, and the period of "atomic diplomacy" and perhaps the Cold War too seemed to be over, as far as Europe was concerned. The major problems of world peace now appeared to lie in Asia.

"And deliver us from the United States"; cartoon in the London "Observer," 1964

6. THE UNITED STATES IN ASIA: IMPERIALISM AND CONTAINMENT

IT WAS IN ASIA, not Europe, that the United States first became involved in world affairs — in the exercise of its power outside the Western Hemisphere. "One elementary fact of American history," the president of the Philippines told the U.S. Congress in 1966, "is that the United States was a Pacific power long before it became an Atlantic power."

After the Spanish-American War, the United States found itself in possession of the Philippine Islands, Guam, Samoa, and the Hawaiian Islands, lands far out in the Pacific, thousands of miles from the continental United States. The nation created from the thirteen colonies had become a colonial power, ruling over people who were subjects, not citizens, and it was involved in the strategic, political, and economic problems that go with being a world power. A map showing "Pacific Imperialism about 1900" indicates that the United States was then engaged in parceling out a region in which Russia, Japan, Great Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands had important interests and ambitions.

Expansion into the Pacific had brought the United States into contact, and possible conflict, with the great European powers, as well as with one emerging great Asiatic power — Japan. To deal with this situation, the United States devised the Open Door Policy — equal commercial opportunities for all nations in China — which Mahan, in 1919, described as one of the "two leading principles of external policy" in U.S. history, the other being the Monroe Doctrine. The "open door" idea was borrowed from Britain, which had followed this policy in China for a century and a half, but which it was now abandoning.

In September 1899, U.S. Secretary of

State John Hay sent open door notes to the interested powers proposing that citizens and nationals of all powers be treated equally in regard to custom duties, harbor dues, and railroad charges in their special spheres of influence in China. The following year he expanded this proposed policy to include the preservation of "Chinese territorial and administrative entity" (later changed to "integrity"), to prevent the effectual parceling out of Chinese territory and sovereignty among the acquisitive foreign powers. The intended effect of this later note was to prevent any further extension of foreign spheres of influence in China in order to safeguard U.S. interests as well as Chinese self-determination.

Mahan interpreted this expanded Open Door Policy, in 1910, as a kind of Monroe Doctrine for the Far East, saying to other nations, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," opposing any "further extension, by political or military intervention, of external control over Eastern markets." The essential question, however, was whether the policy would have any practical effect unless it were backed up by power — political and, ultimately, military. All the imperialist powers agreed to the Open Door Policy on paper and proceeded to violate it in practice. The maintenance of the static balance of power demanded by the policy, as Mahan saw it, would ultimately require that the "latent power" of the United States become "overt action." But this country consistently refused to use military power in Asia for forty years, and it was not until 1941, when Japan attacked its territory in the Pacific, that its latent power became overt action.

Domestic opposition to the whole venture of Pacific expansionism was based on either moral or prudential grounds: that it involved the rule of subject peoples without their consent or that it was a dangerous adventure that would needlessly menace the national security. For the moral idealists it was, in author Barbara Tuchman's phrase, "the end of a dream" — of the image of the United States as a unique nation that did not engage in imperialist aggression, conquest, and aggrandizement. For the prudential-minded, it was sheer folly to make the nation vulnerable in an area where it had no vital interests and could not exercise effective power, and where other great powers could and did.

"It is not the mission of the United States to set right everything that is amiss all over the world," Josiah Quincy had declared in 1900, "even if we have interests involved, or to take part in remodeling the government of some four hundred millions of people who deeply resent foreign interference with their affairs." Had the expansionists of 1898 realized the pitifully small U.S. economic stakes in the Far East and the vast strategic problems involved, Samuel F. Bemis declared as late as 1942, "they would not have embarked so precipitately upon the conspicuous but unprofitable and foolhardy venture into the world politics of Asia, so alien to American continental traditions and interests, so dangerous to the welfare of the United States."

Mahan, however, in 1910, had seen the United States as a natural Pacific power, well placed "by her geographical situation" and "her advanced position in that ocean" to see that its policy aims were achieved and its interests protected. At the same time he had recognized that Japan was the second of "the two chief Pacific nations," with a great navy and an ocean coastline, offering the counterweight in the Pacific balance of power that Mahan saw as "the best security for international peace." Yet it was clear to him that Japan had "natural commercial advantages," resting on geographical propinquity, cheap labor, and other economic strengths, that might lead her to political control, *i.e.*, "control by force," which

would pose the most menacing challenge to the Open Door Policy. Indeed, it was the nation opened to commerce with the West by a U.S. naval squadron and treaty in 1853-1854 that was to provide the main obstacle to U.S. policy in Asia in the first half of the twentieth century.

The first Roosevelt, despite his previous militant expansionist rhetoric and programs, followed a policy of conciliation toward the emerging Japanese power in order to maintain a balance between Japan and Russia in the Far East. His administration in effect recognized Japan's special position in Korea and southern Manchuria in return for assent to American position and policy in the Pacific. He settled the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 to the satisfaction of most of Japan's claims and mollified its resentment against immigration restrictions and segregation measures aimed at its residents in the United States.

Roosevelt's successors, Taft and Wilson, took a different tack. Taft pressured U.S. financial interests to engage in railroad building and other ventures in China, which alarmed Japan and led to a Russo-Japanese treaty parceling out respective spheres of influence in Manchuria. Wilson ended this Dollar Diplomacy policy but angered Japan by reemphasizing the "territorial integrity" aspect of the Open Door Policy and declaring that the United States would "preserve the status quo in China." When Japan ignored these warnings and tried to secure positions in Southern Manchuria and Shantung Province through the Twenty-One Demands of 1915, the United States declared it would not recognize such gains. However, in 1917, this country recognized Japan's special interests in China, particularly in the part to which her possessions were contiguous.

The United States interpreted this to mean a special economic influence, not a paramount political position, as Japan did, and continued to insist on the territorial and administrative integrity of China. At Versailles, in 1919, it had to concede Japan's special position in Shantung, to which it had secured rights through secret treaties with the Allies, but political control was turned back to China. Since the United States was the only power making these demands and restrictions, it began to appear to Japan as the prime opponent, standing in the way of Japanese ambitions in East Asia.

Correspondent Arthur Bullard criticized this policy at the time on the grounds that it stifled a desperately needy people and sowed the seeds of a future war. Japan's expansion into Formosa, Korea, and China, he maintained, was necessitated by its growing population, scant food supply and natural resources, and need for economic development. A really fair and equal application of the Open Door Policy would result in "Japanese commercial predominance in China," equivalent to the U.S. position in Central America. The United States could prevent this, he warned, only at the cost of Japanese hatred and enmity and open warfare, when Japan grew stronger and acquired allies.

The United States tried to deal with the situation by open diplomacy again, this time by means of the Washington Conference of 1921-1922, which was hailed by Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes as a great step toward "the reign of peace." The naval treaty negotiated there restricted the Japanese to a permanent position of inferiority vis-à-vis the United States and Britain, but there were many loopholes for naval expansion. A four-power treaty (including France) pledged mutual nonaggression in the Pacific area and prohibited fortifications and naval bases in Western Pacific possessions, such as Guam and the Philippines. A nine-power treaty affirmed the Open Door Policy in China, making a unilateral American doctrine binding under international law.

Nathaniel Peffer, looking back in 1933,

in the light of Japanese aggression in Manchuria in 1931-1932, dismissed the Washington accords as mere "amicable generalities of self-denying ordinances," which were futile because they did not deal with the basic economic causes of conflict in the Far East. Japan's penetration of Manchuria was part of a long history of foreign acquisition of Chinese soil and resources, and U.S. policy setting up a status quo Monroe Doctrine in Asia discriminated against Japan — the latecomer among the exploiters of China's opportunities. Peffer advised junking the whole system of foreign special privileges that had existed since 1842 and opening China equally to all nations, including Japan. The price of maintaining the old system would probably be war with Japan, followed by U.S. hegemony in the Far East and its inheritance of Japan's imperial problems and enemies. The United States, he said, should decide if it wanted to pay that price.

In spite of these and other warnings the United States continued to follow a policy of nonviolence and nonrecognition toward Japan's forcible gains in Manchuria and China proper. In 1931 it called on the League of Nations to take action against Japan, but was unwilling to engage in economic sanctions, lest this lead to war. In 1937, when Japan invaded China, Secretary of State Cordell Hull responded with a declaration of the principles of international law and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. He circularized this to all the governments in the world, and, like his predecessor Hay with the Open Door Policy, got unanimous agreement on paper.

Recent critics of this policy of trying to achieve "collective security" by moral disapproval alone have pointed out that it did not stop Japan, nor help China, but only convinced the Japanese that the United States was its main enemy, standing directly in its path in Asia. Where the use of force was not possible or advisable, according to the critics, the old methods of diplomacy and conciliation — or "appeasement" — were the only reasonable ways to preserve national interests and international peace. The policy followed by the United States, declared the American ambassador to Japan, Joseph C. Grew, in 1937, "leads not to peace but potentially to war." Franklin Roosevelt's "quarantine the aggressors" speech in 1937 seemed to point to some concrete "positive endeavors to preserve peace" and halt aggression, but, in the face of hostile public reaction, he hastened to add that he had meant nothing definite or substantial.

In 1940 the United States finally took economic sanctions against Japan, cutting off all trade in an effort to restrain her advance into Southeast Asia and even to make her move out of China. The best strategy, according to Ambassador Grew, was to keep peace with Japan until, it was hoped, the British won the war in Europe, and then make some reasonable and viable readjustment in Asia that would be acceptable to Japan. The latter, however, which had picked up one strong ally, Nazi Germany, through the Tripartite Pact of 1940, felt throttled and inhibited by America's status quo policy at a time when opportunities for expansion were ripe and the need for resources was greater than ever. The military party in charge of its government decided on war and struck in the manner feared in 1898-1900 and spelled out in detail by Homer Lea in 1901.

The result of the war was that the United States became the supreme naval power in the Pacific and the major Western power in Asia. As General Douglas MacArthur pointed out in 1951, the nation had transformed its "western strategic frontier" from the West Coast and an exposed, vulnerable salient (Hawaii-Midway-Guam-Philippines) to the entire Pacific Ocean, now controlled by U.S. sea and air power and "a chain of islands [bases] extending in

an arc from the Aleutians to the Marianas." The Pacific had become a friendly lake, "a vast moat to protect us . . . a protective shield for all of the Americas and all free lands of the Pacific Ocean area."

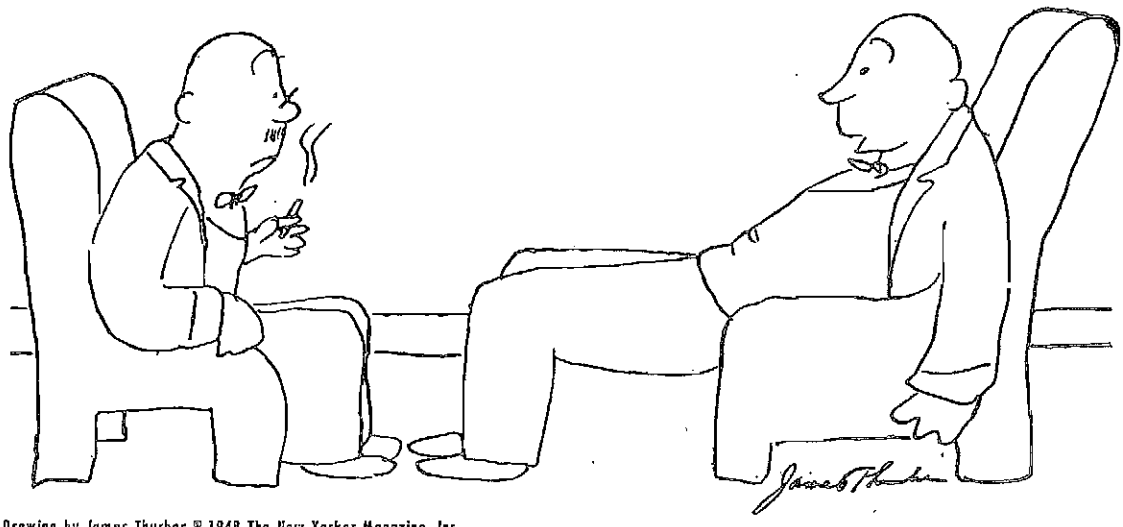
Despite this satisfying transformation of power realities in the Pacific, all was not secure there, as MacArthur himself was quick to say. Japan had been eliminated as a military and imperialistic power, but, as Peffer had forecast, the United States inherited its former problems and enemies. For the Soviet Union was now very much in the picture in East Asia as a result of territorial acquisitions and a special position in Northern Korea, Manchuria, and Outer Mongolia, which was acknowledged at Yalta. Moreover, China, whose national unity and independence had been a central aim of U.S. foreign policy for half a century, was now an enemy power, with whose troops U.S. Marines had been engaged in Korea shortly before MacArthur made his strategic analysis.

A new threat and a new vulnerability had arisen from an aroused Chinese nationalism under dynamic Communist leadership. The new U.S. "defense" line in the Western Pacific, MacArthur insisted, had to be maintained in all its segments; hence, "under no circumstances must Formosa fall under Communist control," or Korea, or Indochina, or any other point in Southeast Asia. Communist China's expansion, military or political, must be checked for the sake of security in the whole Pacific area. The policy of "containment" in Asia, as in Europe, became U.S. policy after 1950, though usually expressed more tactfully and cautiously than MacArthur had put it.

The alternative of a different policy and strategy was indicated by Secretary of State Dean Acheson's statement in 1950 on "military security in the Pacific." His proposed defense perimeter ran from the Aleutians to Japan, the Ryukyu Islands, and the Philippines. Formosa and Korea, not to speak of Indochina, were conspicuously absent from this carefully stated zone of necessary defense and commitment. According to Hans Morgenthau, the Joint Chiefs of Staff as well as General MacArthur were convinced at that time (January 1950) that Korea was indefensible and not a proper place to employ U.S. military forces. However, when confronted by Communist armed aggression in South Korea later in the year, and by the possibility of a Communist or Communist-front take-over in Vietnam in the late 1950s and 1960s, the United States decided to respond with armed force. The wheel had turned full cycle in U.S. Far Eastern policy — from nonviolence and nonintervention to military and political involvement.

By the early 1960s — with the apparent slackening of American-Soviet tensions in Europe and the approach of an atomic détente — the Western Pacific and East Asian areas provided the most burdensome problems for U.S. foreign policy. Communist China was the major problem there, opposing America's aims and working for the removal of its power and influence from the area. Devising viable policies to deal with actual problems and conditions, however, was hampered, starting in the early 1950s, by the popular reaction of frustration, disgust, and resentment to the development of events in the Far East.

Foreign policy became a major issue in domestic politics. A strong political movement to push the claims of the Nationalist government on Formosa as the sole government of China — the so-called "China Lobby" — emerged, led by Senator William Knowland of California, dubbed "the Senator from Formosa." A citizens' Committee of One Million against the Admission of Communist China to the United Nations was highly effective, and it became political suicide even to talk about the pos-



Drawing by James Thurber © 1948 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

"Do you remember, Crosby, when the only thing to fear was fear itself?"

sibility of recognizing Communist China as the *de facto* government of mainland China. More important, the recrimination and search for scapegoats for the U.S. "loss" of China led to a purge of many State Department and Foreign Service officials who had knowledge and experience in the area. To many observers, it became questionable whether a popular democracy could follow a deliberate, cool-headed foreign policy in such a situation, and Tocqueville's doubts on this score seemed to have some basis.

To prevent the military expansion of Communist China, the United States had negotiated a series of individual defense pacts with nations ranging from Japan and Korea to Australia and New Zealand, and also the eight-nation Southeast Asia Treaty of 1954. Clearly the United States was the only effective protector of the non-Communist nations in Asia that wished such protection, including even members of the British Commonwealth, since Columbia and not Britannia now ruled the waves, and the air, in the Western Pacific.

But just as clearly, military measures were not enough to promote the development of stable, self-governing regimes in the emerging new nations in the area, nor to prevent the revolutionary influence of the new great power in Asia, Communist China. The call from some quarters in American political life for the United States to become the leader of a new Holy Alliance against revolutionary developments hardly seemed practicable, even if it were desirable. Yet the United States was convinced that it had to prevent domination of the area by one power, and the policy of the Open Door, which had now rudely been closed from within, was replaced by one of "containment" against Communist aggression. Thus the Truman Doctrine was extended by Presidents Kennedy and Johnson from Europe to Asia.

Still, many possibilities remained open and new situations constantly arose in the unpredictable East. The "indissoluble" unity between the Soviet Union and Communist China, which seemed so absolute in 1951, had come apart by the mid-1960s, to the point of angry hostility and competition between the two great Communist powers. Indonesia, which had seemed securely tied

to Communist China, turned, slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Communists and alleged Communist sympathizers, and established an anti-Communist government. Communist North Korea, remarkably, expressed strong disagreement with China's foreign policy. Communism no longer appeared as a unitary, monolithic movement.

At one end of the scale of possibilities for the United States was all-out war with Communist China, and either "getting the job done" or being engulfed in a global nuclear holocaust. At the other end was leaving the whole area open to Chinese penetration and domination as the natural ruling power in the region. In between were many other possibilities, including countenancing or supporting Communist or Communist-front governments to serve the U.S. containment policy as buffers against China. And, finally, there was always the possibility that the hostility and uncompromising struggle for power between the United States and Communist China might be transformed some day into a mutual recognition of one another's influence and interests in the region — that what had failed in the first half of the century with Japan would succeed in the second half with China.

In any case, as the United States approached the 200th anniversary of its birth as a nation, it seemed more true than ever that its security and destiny, and hence that of the whole world, depended on what it did and what was done to it in Asia.