FOREIGN POLICY: THE REALISM OF IDEALISM

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World politics today is admittedly bipolar, and it seems destined to remain so within the foreseeable future. Beset by its sustained tension, Americans have been led to debate, sometimes acrimoniously, the proper foundations, scope, and content of an effective foreign policy. Since presumably the central theme and central purpose of this debate is the definition of what constitutes the American national interest, the first objective is to define the idea of national interest. Thereafter it is necessary to draw proper deductions relevant to the total world situation, and in turn to apply these deductions as policy to the forces there at work. These forces—political, economic, ideological, and military—in their interconnectedness collectively constitute the raw materials for assessment, judgment, planning, and action in our policy-making.

Resultant differences of opinion therefore can take place at different levels. Initially there are vastly divergent concepts of the characteristics of a nation, of the role of nations in the world, and of the nature of interests proper to a nation. The scope of these divergencies is often hidden by our tendency to find in the term “national interest” connotations of particularism, of exclusiveness, of the nation as against, or superior to, the rest of the world. Yet, save for a few extremists, even the advocates of world government base their position on a theory which takes account of, although it does not give primacy to, the interests of the American nation itself.

Even if agreement on the meaning of national interest is reached, views as to what constitute suitable means for its furtherance can differ greatly. The issues here, manifestly, turn on the logical consonance of means and ends, and on the suitability, both practical and ethical, of means to ends. A concept of national interest may be agreed upon as sound and adequate; but two questions still remain: will suggested means prove efficacious, and will they, even if efficacious, clearly or subtly corrupt professed ideals? Indeed, in a world of fundamental conflict, these questions together may raise in acute form the further question whether it is possible to be at once effective and uncorrupted. The answering of such queries necessitates an analysis of the objectives and instruments of opposing interests. It necessitates an examination of the aspirations and the possible developments of peoples to be influenced and won. It necessitates exploration of the grounds on which and the means by which they may be influenced and won. It necessitates careful consideration of the consonance of those grounds and means with possible and actual concepts of American interests.

At all points in any reexamination of national interest, however, it is essential to avoid a tendency to be bewitched by neatly compacted arguments that either laud altruism and moral abstractions uncritically or defile the idea of national interest as the motivating basis of foreign policy.
I. PERSONS AND NATIONS

Foreign policies are not built upon abstractions, remarked Charles Evans Hughes, “but are the result of practical conceptions of national interest arising out of some immediate exigency or standing out vividly in historical perspective.” That nations, like persons, ought to pursue their several real self-interests, and that they will pursue their supposed self-interests, may be taken for granted. As with persons, so with nations, disagreements arise when the attempt is made to define the nature of the self and to deduce consequent interests. Definition of the nation is especially difficult since, unlike the individual self, it is not immediately experienced. Indeed, one major source of disagreement arises from the very concept of a national self. Some persons may and do treat the nation as a real and ultimate being rather than as a continuing organization of the institutions of life. But quite apart from the resultant violence done to individuals, including those who hold this misconception, there results a great oversimplification of the problem. For the major difficulty of properly discovering national interest arises from the fact that it is at once a product and a directional molding of particular interests, of persons and of groups.

For the person, the concept of the self is both immediate and ultimate. The concept of the nation, on the other hand, is derivative and instrumental, even though any individual’s concept of his nation and of his relation to it may mold him and constitute part of the framework of his own self. Through inner inconsistencies and conflicts, and even more by reason of unexamined habit, the individual may pursue his interests inadequately. He may even act without regard to, or in conflict with, consciously held ideals of his self, just as he may, through ignorance or misinformation, reasonably pursue sound interests of the self in a manner which is inappropriate from the viewpoint of actual success. But in the case of the nation, with its everlasting interplay of particular interests, of groups and persons ever-changing both in their activities and objectives and in their importance and power within the whole, the very formulation of a coherent view of national purpose and interest becomes inordinately difficult. The never-fixed pattern of these cross-cutting interests makes extraordinarily complicated the sustained pursuit of any national interest that is formulated, especially when the nation is vast, democratic, and pluralistic. The changing weight of interests and the interplay through them of changing concepts of interest, some at one moment dominant and at another recessive, manifestly make a hazardous task of reconciling prevalent views of what constitutes national interest with any reasoned theory of that interest. Similarly, even if the prevalent concept of any moment seems also to be a rational one, there is no guarantee that it will remain central over any significant time span. Thus the measure of national self-interest, as Ortega y Gasset observed of the true meaning of any word or phrase, lies not in the dictionary: “it is in the instant.”

It is, indeed, these difficulties, reflected in fluid and changing policy, in an absence of neatly coherent continuity and of the possibility of easily relating tendencies of the moment to a systematic pattern, that have led so many commentators to deplore the seeming incoherence of American foreign policy, and
FOREIGN POLICY: THE REALISM OF IDEALISM

even to deny that the United States has possessed anything worthy of the name of policy. Yet such elasticity and variability may well be a reflection of the vitality of our democratic society, and of the effectiveness of government in reflecting the living forces at work therein. The twin drawbacks of our unpredictability to others, who may in time find us even more perfidious than Albion of yore, and of our own lack of a clear sense of where we stand and what we stand for, are inescapable. Yet the gains may well outweigh the losses. In any event, the situation would appear to be a necessary corollary of the democratic way of life.

Certainly it is worth noting that one of the main appeals of modern dictatorships has been their claim to eliminate conflicting concepts of interest by defining one alone as the compelling interest of the nation and attempting to give a permanent ascendancy to it. Dictators have invariably argued that the interest so defined is the full embodiment of, or the nearest practical approach to, what the national interest genuinely is. But their definition has rarely been based on reasoned analysis or on the assumption that human beings are rational, nor has it reflected the view that men ought to endeavor to achieve rationality in their collective behaviors. Observation of the life, and in certain cases the death, of dictatorships makes clear that such attempted singleness of definition of interests has not led to a root consistency in practice, even when it has created useful myths for the genesis and maintenance of an illusion of consistency. Moreover, insofar as the singleness of interest has been consistently pursued, it has rarely led to the predicted results, to the actual achievement of the stated national interest. Indeed, there is reason to question whether such definition, however great the predictability it allows to others, really makes the lasting conduct of foreign policy more successful, although it may simplify diplomacy. When adaptations are actually made while the nature of the controlling interest is professed to remain unchanged, the consequence may well be outrage to others. Their reaction can then prove deleterious from the point of view of the actual pursuit and attainment of the nation’s own professed objectives.

In any event, the theory and practice of a democratic society and culture are incompatible with an interpretation of the nation which pursues a super-interest according to which the interests of groups and persons are defined and determined, rather than an interest which is molded and shaped by the more finite interests. The national interest is at most a continuous and quasi-organic outcome and synthesis of an interplay of forces, in which varied concepts of national role and function and of the relationship of particular interests to the nation are an inherent part. The nation is an instrument for persons who, amidst their vast diversity, share some common heritage and some general aspirations which can be pursued by collective action. A national interest, it is true, is not merely a sum of individual interests, which, in part by very reason of their divergencies, cannot be added or averaged. Rather, it is in large measure a set of some conditions which have to be furthered and of which some must be preserved by appropriate action. The reason for compacting the national
interest to a meaningful definition is to insure as far as possible that there may be some predictability in change within an order so oriented as to give large degrees of satisfaction to major elements in the society. Thus, the concept of a national interest must commemorate and clarify the continuity of a people at the same time that it identifies for persons generally a promise and an effective program for their continued pursuit of betterment.

Since the political order of the nation, unlike the entity of a person, is an instrument, the national interest is also derivative. So to state is the reverse of denying that the maintenance and functioning of the nation is a fundamental condition for the pursuit of more ultimate personal interests, as it is a limiting or guiding factor in their pursuit. But its derivative character does suggest one limitation on a concept of national interest which is not a part of the loosely analogous concept of a personal interest. No nation could exist without persons, since society is composed of persons; nevertheless, any particular person may properly decide, by reason of the ethical principles which give his life meaning and purpose, to sacrifice his life in the service of others. He may do so especially when specific conditions he confronts present the alternative of death or corruption. The nation, on the other hand, just because it is instrumental, and despite the fact that a society not composed of nations is conceivable, has to maintain itself at least as long as, and insofar as, its structure, organization, and functioning are conditions of the development and fulfillment of the persons, or of the greater part of the persons, composing it. The nation cannot with propriety seek its own elimination. Certainly it cannot pursue a policy calculated to bring about the elimination of all persons, or of the great majority of persons, embraced within it; its interest can never be collective suicide or martyrdom in the name of service to an ideal principle. Because it serves shared interests and properly aims to promote conditions for the better realization of personal interest beyond its own direct creation, purview, or control, its continued maintenance and function is by definition needful.

This reasoning is no argument against all risk-taking by the nation. The collectivity which is the nation may well find that a willingness to risk, though not to court, destruction, is a necessary condition for the fulfillment of persons and groups within it, or at the very least for the prevention of frustration of their purposes, under world conditions not of its own exclusive creation. But the nation, as a political institution with a particular set of functional obligations, has to be operated on the presumption of collective permanence. There is a real interest, on the part both of the nation's own people and of humanity generally, in the development of the social and cultural order which the nation serves. Particular national policies may diminish the interest of other nations in its welfare, and may even lead them to desire the destruction of the existing nation-state. Nevertheless, the enrichment of human culture and the development of humanity make the preservation of its component peopleslastingly desirable. Indeed, one criterion of national policy and one basis for evaluating concepts of national interest is the degree to which they do or do not give justification of a rational kind to a desire on the part of others to destroy the exist-
ing nation-state. A concept of national interest in any way incompatible with the peaceful existence of the nation which holds it, certainly confronts an initial presumption against its adequacy and correctness. Similarly, and a fortiori, a concept of national interest which denies the right of other nations to exist naturally promotes hostility to the particular nation espousing it, to a point where others are prepared to seek and pursue not only the destruction of the existing government, but even the elimination of the nation’s people. Such a concept is, on its very face, untenable.

The argument that national self-interest cannot properly lead to a deliberate search for collective suicide must not, therefore, be taken to imply that the nation’s interest is the sole and exclusive welfare of its own people regardless of, or in opposition to, that of others. Nor does it imply either the nation’s duty to maintain an exclusive juristic sovereignty as traditionally conceived or, yet again, its refusal to accept limitations, by agreement or law, which prohibit purely unilateral action. The nation’s acceptance of limitations depends on the relation of prevalent conditions to the furtherance of present and anticipated purposes of its own people as at once involved in humanity, yet distinct, or distinguishable by attitude and interest, from other organized parts thereof. In this context practical decision involves assessment of the current state of the arts and sciences, of technology and intercommunications, and of realizable potentials for a broadened order, capable of satisfying both the people of the particular nation and others simultaneously.

The nation is, in short, a lasting, yet ever-changing thing—“the cup of the community,” as Madariaga aptly identifies it. It is not a static bundle of exclusive interests. It is not a real being. It does not exist in a vacuum. Its role and function, its powers and its limitations, are not permanent and unchanging, but adaptive and purposive. It is not to be sacrificed in the service of supposed moral ends which, when so defined as to exclude consideration of its own special interests and conditions, are clearly false. Yet it is no insular, narrowing order whose members can fulfill their purposes by an exclusive selfishness. Until a world state which embraces all persons is achieved—when the problem disappears—the nation cannot be unconcerned with the aspirations and the welfare of other peoples. If, however, under existing conditions it is thus unconcerned, it is ultimately unconcerned with its own well-being also.

II. UTILIZING POWER

Much of the difficulty both in defining and in implementing the idea of the national self-interest has arisen from ambiguities in the concept of power. Since today power is usually, though not uniformly, accepted as the very substance, the key idea and concern, of politics, the difficulty tends to grow rather than decrease. In discussions of the international or world order, confusion has been particularly great. For there “power politics,” a facile but largely meaningless phrase with overtones of healthy realism or sinister immoralism, has rather generally been taken to denote the essence of the matter, as well as in some mysterious way to provide a key to the analysis and solution of all problems.
The generation, the husbanding, and the application of power are indeed central to politics. They are, what is more, vital to the furthering of most social interests and to the achievement of most human purposes, provided that power be defined in a sufficiently broad way. Because of the instrumental and external nature of political action, however, the creation, preservation, and application of power to achieve the optimum of human political purposes, necessitate a degree of force and constraint over persons. Such force and constraint are not equally necessary to other forms of human influence, where the type of accomplishment desired and the relevant means do not involve the same externality and impersonality. In some institutions, such as the family, appeal is to more tender emotions not characteristic of, or appropriate to, the public order. These emotions may constitute an effective leverage which, though broadly definable as power, is certainly not, either initially or ultimately, force. In other situations appeal can be made to reason and argument; in yet others to common religious belief and consequent duty. In all of them force is rarely successful. It is certainly not identical with power. Indeed, its use or attempted use, as for instance in love, often perverts, corrupts, and ultimately destroys the motivating emotion itself. Force rarely creates, in the sense of evoking willing positive action. But it can prevent action, as it can destroy actors. As a deterrent from undesired action, force may, especially when suitably supplemented by more positive elements of power such as consent, create a base for the effective use and direction of power.

Politics, then, does mean power generated and used, with force and constraint as techniques to channelize and limit activities, although consent is needed to make the power effective by leading to the positive fruition of policy and eliminating friction. Certainly it would be idiotic in internal or in international affairs to talk of powerless politics. The issues are always how to generate and to use power; what is the interest which power is to serve; what conception of interest, duly accepted, will be most effective as a generator of power; and, especially in the international field, what is the relation of force and persuasion to the diminution of conflict and the creation of harmony.

The international order is composed of many powers which differ in their particular interests, yet whose members all share common humanity. Although particular national policies are in competition here, the competition is not simply a struggle between the particular powers at the moment involved in a specific issue. It is also directed toward getting the allegiance or support of third parties, singly or in groups. Since these also have their interests and aspirations which are supported by various degrees of will and strength, power has a limited, though not precisely defined, force at its command. In the resultant competition, the relative effectiveness of any two opposed parties in winning the support of a third, prior to war and short of conquest, is the outcome of a parallelogram of force and principle.

The probable rationale of the otherwise misleading and confusing term "power politics" arises from an essential difference between internal and international politics. In the internal sphere the political institution known as the
state is accepted at once as the locus of contention between interest groups and persons and as the necessary order for their better fulfillment. Struggles can normally be solved by essentially diplomatic means, with an accepted enforcement agency endowed with force as a reserve in the background. Such solutions are possible just because of acknowledged common purpose and shared interest. In the world order, however, common purpose is often unrecognized and is rarely dominant, despite acknowledgments of an ultimate common humanity. Similarly, organs of settlement and enforcement of the rules of a common order, when adjustment by politic compromise fails, are rudimentary or nonexistent.

III. NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST OR SHANGRI-LA ISOLATIONISM?

In the world order, more or less coherent systems of national interests and strategies of interest-promotion come into contact and conflict. Under modern conditions of industrialism and intercommunication, such contact and conflict are the inescapable consequences of nationhood and the possession of national interests. The resultant competitive sharing renders isolation and isolationism meaningless. It would be impossible for the professed isolationist to maintain his stand consistently with the preservation of the totality of his interest, even if other nations should be willing to allow any one nation to enjoy and remain in a position of isolation, which they surely are not. It is also true that divergent concepts of national interests, based on particular traditions and locations, possess a generative power, of which force is indeed one instrument. But for the effective and continued pursuit of interests, including above all lasting material and spiritual satisfactions at home, force alone is, as political thinkers have known for centuries, an instrument both inadequate and inappropriate. It is necessary in the national interest of any nation, to generate power as influence on, and persuasion of, other nations. Such power may be generated bilaterally, and even multilaterally to a certain point, by appeal to common or complementing selfishness. But ultimately it has to rest on a larger common appeal, directed to universal interests, even though these are distorted by the particular immediacies of the power making the appeal and of the power or powers to whom it is made. Such distortion unfortunately gives aid and comfort to proponents of power politics, as it does more generally to those who argue that in the conduct of international relations it is sufficient to rely on the immediate and narrowed interests of neighbors and temporary allies, supported by military preparedness. Perhaps, to put it more fundamentally, this distortion tends to disguise, if not to hide completely, the deeper common principles which nations in truth share and which give meaning to their very immediate self-interests. Undoubtedly, the essential moral weakness of the international order is the absence of an impartial judge and interpreter of claims to rights, presenting a situation analogous to Locke’s state of nature. Such a lack is doubly evil: it prevents genuine adjudication of disputes, and it hides the reality of those common rights which are in truth shared interests to be interpreted.

In their policy-making, individual nations may recognize the impossibility, or at the very least the painful inadequacy, of an escapist isolationism as the
means to pursue their own concepts of national well-being. As an alternative
they may elect, in both the formulation and implementation of policy, to deny
the very right to exist of some or of all other nations. They may avowedly or by
implication deny the right to treatment as human beings of persons composing
other nations. So to do is, of course, to rely on force alone, in the sense of mar-
tial might. It is to reject any possible common principle of appeal based on
sharing, as it is to forego any freely won allegiance and support. The immediate
objective may be the subordination of others as slaves, rather than their total
extermination. Yet the probable consequence of any such unreal, "pure" policy is either the elimination of all other nations or, as we have shown above,
the destruction as a power of the nation which relies upon it. As C. J. Friedrich
has shown in another context, consent and constraint are functionally related
in the creation and use of power. The logic of force only is no consent. Its con-
sequence, because it cannot create power based on the sympathy or cooperation
of others, is the need to eliminate. The particular nation which takes such a
view necessarily proclaims itself, by prideful ambition, the sole state in the
world. It rejects international politics; it rejects the possibility of creating and
using power in an international order to pursue its real, but limited, interests.

IV. THE HARMONIZATION OF NATIONAL SELF-INTERESTS

The actual course of international politics is necessarily mixed. Where one
party possesses force and is able to apply it effectively, and the second party
is aware of such possession and willingness, the latter, assuming it to be the
weaker, will normally redefine its own interest in the light of the actual al-
ternatives confronting it. Such redefinition will relate concepts of ideal na-
tional interests, including potentials for their realization, with a view of what
constitutes a minimally tolerable collective life. The last of these in turn de-
fines with some precision the limits of policy for the superior power. For, es-
pecially under modern conditions, the collective resistance of war, as well as
resistance movements to an occupying conqueror, will to a greater or lesser ex-
tent frustrate the latter's objectives insofar as they involve the exploitation
through oppression, rather than the extermination, of the conquered. Even
passive resistance and sabotage may seriously limit the effectiveness of ex-
ploration by a conqueror. This is a consideration which, at the appropriate
point in time, must be taken into account when the dominant power defines its
own national interest and determines the techniques appropriate to its further-
ance.

The preceding analysis, based on the postulate of two unequal powers, in-
volves a great and misleading oversimplification. For a weaker power, calcula-
tions of national interests usually present alternatives of alliance with or sub-
mission to different major powers. To these may be added opportunities for
collective alliances of many minor powers, in resistance to, and to maintain in-
dependence from, both or all major powers. Here decision involves calculation
of the potential realization of ideals of national interest, or at least of the avoid-
ance of extreme frustration of such ideals. The search is for the optimum way of
FOREIGN POLICY: THE REALISM OF IDEALISM
351

national life in relation to the force generated, or capable of generation, in the relevant time span.

It is, of course, still possible that a major power might conceive of total conquest over other peoples as a worthwhile and possible undertaking. However, at the least such a totally exclusive viewpoint diminishes potential power. Given the nature of modern weapons and any conceivable balance of available forces under present circumstances, such a policy would probably be self-defeating. It would lead, not to the exclusive domination and population by one people or race of the whole habitable globe, but to the destruction in large part of both aggressor and victim. It might even render major areas of the civilized world uninhabitable for a considerable period.

In any event, the present-day bipolar world does not present this issue; nor, whatever the possible indictments of Soviet totalitarianism, does it warrant the conclusion that Russia maintains this view of national interest. The two major parties in the conflict do indeed have national interests in the short term incompatible with one another. No doubt, too, the Soviet Union desires both to expand and, in the present circumstances, to dominate. Yet each side professes, and uses as a major implement of power, a philosophy which claims universality. Each professes to serve not only its own peculiar interests but the interests of all people, of humanity generally.

A nation's possession of armed might may help persuade other nations to accept a particular and biased interpretation of more universal insights. It may be a means to prevent dissent or backsliding once the viewpoint is accepted. Similarly, it may be a tool to prevent rejection of or escape from domination, by reason of disappointment, once control is achieved, whether by consent or by conquest. But it is a more vital point that the sponsorship by a major power of a moral appeal based on universalism, though addressed to specific national interests and needs, today is urgently required for the very generation of power. The furtherance of particular national interests necessitates their identification with the interests of other peoples, as the latter does in fact conceive them, or can be persuaded to conceive and formulate them. The first and chief weapon of national interest, in time as in effect, is then ideas, which are essentially moral doctrines. Effectively to pursue its own interests, the nation has to profess to be universal in interest, and to accept the equality of persons and peoples. Indeed, the utilization of a national interest concept based upon a moral appeal as the firmament of our foreign policy, holds out the greatest promise for meeting the challenge of events that lie ahead.

One testimony to the truth of this thesis is the common use by East and West of the term “democracy.” The significance of its use is not lessened by differences in interpretation. Nor is it diminished by possible insincerity in its actual utilization or, where influence or control would permit, in implementation, by one of the parties. In a world where isolation seems impractical and extermination of all peoples save one improbable, even were it desired, the process of furthering national interests necessitates limited identification, appeals to shared purposes, and the generation of power primarily through ideas essentially moral.
in character. Force, which is but a portion of power, not its prime creator, is indeed relevant as pressure, the utilization of which reflects a lack of an impartial judge under an established law; yet force corrupts the purity and perverts the use of moral ideas. It is finally these ideas—of equality, of sharing, and of liberty, common to the great world religions and philosophies, including Marxism itself—which play a vital role in international politics.

Idealism, far from being utopian and destructive of realistic foreign policy, is basic to such policy. It is likewise basic to the idea that force itself, in the form of warfare, is but a means to creative peace. The purpose of force is to redress evils which, as Grotius first clearly stated and the whole Catholic school of international law has continuously affirmed, stand in the way of man's self-realization through a just social order. The corruption and perversion of moral ideals by simplified propaganda may indeed lead at times to a very unrealistic representation of other peoples or nations collectively as devils, to the detriment both of national and of general human interests. Such falsification can create the belief that, once the devils are destroyed, no further effort is needed: men may then live happily ever after. The error here, however, should not be attributed to idealism; instead, it indicates the necessity for the integrity of factual reality as the basis for moral judgment, just as, on a different level, it is an argument for the proper maintenance and use of force. A moral use of force always necessitates the subordination and service of that force to ethical aspiration. Force is not properly set in balance against idealism itself. Rather, its right application is always subject to moral judgment, even as sound morality necessitates its availability. That curious professed realism which insists that moral ideas are a protective coloration for exclusive and antagonistic interests, is in truth at once immoral and unrealistic. Moreover, to profess it deceives its exponent far more than it deceives those to whom the "realism" is professedly addressed. As a consequence, its potency as a creator of effective power is doubly diminished.

A genuine foreign policy necessitates absence of hypocrisy. Under present conditions it necessitates proceeding beyond the self-delusion that the road to the promotion of political self-interests is military and economic aid to others for selfish reasons only. Effective promotion of American national interests, for instance, requires concern for the real well-being of our NATO allies. It requires, more profoundly, the pursuit of commonly shared ideas and interests beyond the chance parallelism of the moment. It necessitates abandonment of the attempt to create, or, when needed, to recreate, an always precarious favorable balance of power against some other major power, at the present moment Russia. It must be based on a long-term parallelism of interests. It must possess an awareness that universalist moral insight is requisite also from the point of view of technology and communication and must envisage the ultimate creation of corresponding world political institutions. Such institutions, not possible at present, must yet be held desiderata which can be achieved in a foreseeable future.

At the present moment it is vital to pursue and effectuate ideas and policies
compatible with the recognized and shared universal interests of those devoted to the ideals of free society and questing man. Certainly these interests necessitate the nurturing and development of the rich diversities of peoples, whose elimination would be impoverishing even were it practicable. Realistic policy is the proof in action of the reality of sharing, despite cultural differences, and beyond any desire to destroy them. It necessitates, above all, the combatting of a hard-boiled, niggardly realism at home. Such realism not only harms our own moral stature, but also gives genuine warrant for realistic insight abroad into the nature of our realism within the confines of its own concepts. The net result is the destruction of the effectiveness of our attempted appeal to moral ideas. Yet we have seen that such ideas are the fundamental generators of power. The essence of the thesis here propounded is that our national power, the organized social creativity of our people, does not diminish, but increases where it works to supplement and to reinforce the generically similar, though in specific content different, creativity in other peoples. The so-called realistic theory of national interest and the balance of power doctrine, insofar as it rests on that theory, constitute in truth a belated translation and preservation of the old economic wage-fund doctrine as a power-fund theory.

V. IDEALISM IN A BIPOLAR WORLD

In the bipolar world as it is today, a major power has to be global in interest and commitment. For one thing, it must recruit support from all lesser and uncommitted powers. It must do so by persuasive demonstration that its doctrines of personality and of democracy and its concept of the compatibility of diverse cultures embraced within a world community, are more sincere and more promising to others, from the point of view of their own national interests, than the alternatives offered. Nonetheless, impurities and biases are inescapable in this imperfect world, not at present capable of world government. The United States must therefore also possess, or rapidly create, the force necessary to reassure others that allegiance to a common cause will not involve the risk of their own rapid destruction or conquest through our failure to support them at all, or by reason of the complete inadequacy of the forces we can make available to the actual task and need. Such force, combined with superior promise and performance in the material realm, can stimulate others to effort and to allegiance freely given because of a conviction of sharing. The sense of sharing can in turn evoke a creative and resistant energy and, if fear is removed, a sense of sufficient strength first to choose our way and then to stand upright in it, in resistance alike to pressure and to force from the U.S.S.R.

The present lack of adequate force on the part of this country, despite a will and a program for its correction, may lead to our espousal of limited commitments on the ground of operational realism. That realism in turn may well result in an indifference to the fate of peoples who are hard to attach to the Western and American program and ideology, and who would be hard to defend in the absence of the necessary force. Yet the very allegiance and energy created by our acceptance of the obligations of an ally possessed of superior power and
by our willingness to take risks not narrowly delimited in advance, can themselves create collective power. For they can persuade other peoples that genuine alliance with us offers greater fulfillment of their overall national interests, defined from the point of view of their ideal objectives, than the alternatives of submersion in the Soviet bloc or of a dubiously secure independence. It is manifestly necessary on our part to indicate the limitations and the difficulties of our own present position of semi-preparedness. It is likewise vital to urge the need for positive action and cooperation by real allies. It is necessary finally to warn them of the possibilities of short-term sacrifices, and even Dunkirks, on their part. In essence, the implications of NATO must be made explicit, while the NATO system must be expanded wherever surviving free powers may, by appropriate effort on our part, be made into allies for peace and prepared for war.

The cost of creating the needed force on our part, plus the cost of aid in the development, both for peace and war, of other peoples, will indeed be great, as the expense of present more limited commitments indicates. It will therefore necessitate short-run sacrifice of standards of living and of leisure on our own part, beyond those at present planned or anticipated. Yet a calculation of immediate national interests based on a narrow calculation of present income and comfort will, in the long run, prove self-defeating. At the very least the following of such a policy risks insufficient power and inadequate force at now unpredictable points where they may be needed. The doctrine of precise and contained commitment, whatever its appeal to the military strategist, is inadequate political strategy, and in truth betokens failure to follow through the concepts of global struggle and possible global war.

In the long run, a more immediately painful policy is more conducive to the national interest. In it lies, not solely the possibility of victory, but the opportunity for the prevention of war and for creative peace. Such policy is our insurance against defeat, in peace or war, by a country which also professes to be the defender and standard-bearer of a universal ethics of social justice. Today that state is more prepared than we, by teaching, and to some extent by actual attitude and behavior, for adequate sacrifices in order to acquire effective power. That its discipline to this end may destroy the very values it professes is here an irrelevance, as it is certainly not an appropriate example. It is our job to achieve an equivalent in morale and effectiveness by a voluntary material sacrifice which avoids the U.S.S.R.'s sacrifice of the values of free men. Similarly, the fact that the Soviet Union, once its power is secure, may prove unwilling to implement its ideals, and may, in lands which accept its promise, in time replace consent and enthusiasm by force, is not relevant to our own case except insofar as the demonstration of disparity between its promise and performance may help create a power friendly to our own cause. Indeed, the combination of the demonstrated unwillingness of the U.S.S.R. to implement its professed ideals immediately or within a specific future with convincing proof of our own will to promote and lastingly to maintain behaviors and institutions expressive of our proclaimed democratic ideals, is the most powerful
force on our side by which to evoke the sustaining power emanating from other people, who in the process of generating it and under its impact become more powerful. The long-run implications of this thesis are greater equality of power, as of living standards. They are also, however, security in the creation and enjoyment of higher standards of living, both economic and cultural, than can otherwise be made available. They are, somewhat paradoxically, the preservation of our initial leadership, as of our differential advantages, through a demonstrated will at once to share and to diminish the latter.

Total commitment and a total idealism which is yet self-interest are our appropriate answers to Soviet totalitarianism. They are the means to success in total war, should it come. They are also the most probable grounds for a lasting peace based on positive policies. These policies must be conceived and geared to the preservation of continuity in ever-changing situations, just as they must be directed finally toward the creation of more effective international institutions.

An effective, because long-term, concept of national interest cannot, of course, rest solely on the grim alternative "we or they." It must accept a commonly shared universe of aspiration, at the same time that it necessarily condemns the forceful imposing of unity. It must aim to create a situation in which effective power at once discourages aggression by, and stimulates transformation in, Russia. American ideological power is in this context a leverage. Such power must be backed by a collective force, with the will to use it, which is organized though not created by itself. Possible transformation in Russia, long hoped for from without and implicitly promised from within, has been prevented first by fear and then by national pride. The shared aspirations of humanity have been hidden by the short-sightedness of some putative American interests, promoted and defended by actually irrelevant dogmas. In Russia they have been corrupted by a yet narrower dogma, progressively perverted and misused. Yet these aspirations may still be realized, provided that American policy generates power through sincerity.

This last proviso necessitates a refusal to appease, which is not synonymous with a refusal to comprehend or, consistently with principle, to conciliate. Apart from direct appeasement, which compounds injustice and sacrifices others after the manner of Munich, it is also possible indirectly to appease by our own refusal to commit ourselves to risks and dangers, a refusal supported by narrowly defined and ungenerous interests at home. Nonetheless, it is vital for America to abandon the position of an infallible and absolutely just deity sitting in judgment, a position even more dangerous when sincere than when hypocritical. It is necessary to reject the dogma that diversity of political and social philosophy is incompatible with fundamental universality. It is essential to probe behind the evils of the present regime of Russia and to perceive the justified realities of its economic and cultural national interests and aspirations. It is vital to understand the genuine relevance of Marxism to the organization of Russia as a would-be industrial country, even as it is necessary to condemn the perversion of Marxist teaching and the misuse of it. This means that it is
necessary to understand the ethical side of Marxist philosophy, with its broad appeal in countries which would avoid Soviet domination as they would avoid dictatorship. It is, finally, necessary to clarify our own theory and practice of a classless society, which is not incompatible with the essential insights of Marx. This society we have been slowly achieving, during a century and more of peaceful change, by an effective wedding of constitutional democracy, here federal and anti-statist, with a highly productive industrial technology, the fruits and blessings of which have been distributed ever more widely and equally. It is necessary to show that this concept is now closer to realization; that our own national interest and purpose is to help its realization; that it promotes social and economic welfare without the necessity of sacrificing individual freedom or the creative method of constitutional democracy. The preservation and the extension of these last, which can only come through voluntary acceptance, are surely the essence of our national interest.

Our interest is the fulfillment compatibly of diverse persons and, by analogy, of diverse peoples. Based on Christian ethics, it is a doctrine of method in coping pragmatically with the realities of differences among men and of imperfections in men. Foreign policy consistently conceived in the light of this tradition and insight at once proclaims, and persuades others of, the realism of idealism.