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## UNITED STATES GLOBAL STRATEGY

An address delivered  
at the Naval War College  
Global Strategy Discussions  
on 10 June 1965

by

The Honorable Paul H. Nitze  
Secretary of the Navy

The key word in the title of these seminars is worth a moment's thought. It is the term *strategic*. Only in the last twenty years or so has that word, along with the related word *strategy*, come to figure importantly in American policies toward the external world. The root term is *strategos*. It is the Greek word for a general—a high military authority.

A strategic view of the world entails looking at it with a concern for considerations of military security. A major power, constrained to preserve its influence in the world—a world marked by divided interests—necessarily has to take a strategic view. Some positions have inherent importance in relation to access to other positions. The great crossroads of the world, the sea narrows, the key peninsulas, the continental gateways, count strategically. A great power inherently projects concern in how control of such areas is disposed. A strategic view must take account of who are friends and who are putative enemies and what are their likely potentials. It takes into account the combination of interests and powers. It gets into the calculus of alliances, spheres of influence, and the like, to keep a satisfactory balance of forces.

One other characteristic—a strategist's problems are rooted in questions of means. He knows what he wants. The pursuit of them is linked to the need of making do. He must mediate among

competing goals. He must balance the present against the future. He knows that wishing alone never makes anything so, that splendid ideas without any clues to how to achieve them are worth a dime a dozen, and that every opportunity entails risk. He expects no final solutions. He is reconciled to Sisyphean tasks.

Still another aspect of the key term is its link to *general*. The tasks of high military commands are encompassing rather than specialized. One in supreme command must have a total grasp. His lot is to be concerned with the big picture. Let his surrogates down the line be content with a narrower view of their duties. He must be a generalist.

Most of us are not cast as strategists. Our lot is to attend to our specialties, smaller or greater. Here, for this all too brief conference, the stress has been on breadth and perspective. I trust you have got something from it. I know that having you here has benefited the Navy's thinking.

My reference to the relative novelty of strategic thinking in United States policy is not intended to attribute a cramped way of thinking to earlier generations of Americans. To the contrary, a broad and sweeping approach to world politics has long been in the American character. In earlier phases—this is my point—the United States had no trouble in meshing security requirements and national precepts. During that century and more spent in fusing into nationhood and rounding out a continental position, the strategic concerns of policy related only to the fending off of encroachments into the American hemisphere.

That was relatively easy—thanks largely to strategic factors attended to by others, notably Great Britain and the Royal Navy. Americans were in position to carp and to criticize the upholders of the shield just as in our own time beneficiaries of United States protection are wont to do.

The nation's broad precepts were—and still are—the ones articulated in the Declaration of Independence. It is a document about foreign policy. It asserts a doctrine about the world environment. The world is a rational world, where truths are self-evident, with a basically unified mankind, whose opinions deserve decent respect. It asserts for the nation a right to an equal station in the nexus of diplomacy in place of subordination in a colonial order. It asserts a similar inherent right for all peoples.

These precepts are bred into our bones. Equality among mankind is a traditional part of our creed. That equality is assumed to have a political cast. Capacity for self-government is assumed implicitly as a universal endowment evenly apportioned. Any regime's rightful powers can stem only from consent. Government from afar violates consent. Hence peoples must be indigenously governed to be governed accountably. Accountable governments will govern well.

Certain corollaries flow. People well governed will not be tempted to exert dominance over others. Hence independence in particular will sustain independence in general. The autonomy of peoples will engender community among peoples. All organized societies will have, and acknowledge, a stake in the independence of others. The security of each will become meshed with the security of all. Peace and universal independence go hand in hand.

All that has an Euclidean sort of clarity and persuasiveness, is accepted on its own terms. Let us not argue the question of empirical proof. Faith in such a set of propositions was widely and profoundly held among our forefathers. In establishing independence, they saw themselves as exemplars for a world order—the *novus ordo seclorum*, the new order of the ages, still celebrated on our one dollar bills.

Under such a concept of independence as a universal and paramount good, what counts above all in respect of any position is the autonomy of the inhabitants. Strategic considerations will take care of themselves. During that departed epoch when the nation's main and virtually single preoccupation in world affairs was the Monroe Doctrine, and another people's sea power provided a vicarious shield, it became easy to regard the original precepts of independence and their corollaries as propositions sustained by their own merits and to overlook the strategic foundations.

How natural it was for Woodrow Wilson to turn to what he believed had been validated by American experience when he was called upon—the first American President to face such a challenge—to adduce some basis for reconstituting order in a disordered world. The answer to perennial conflicts of power, in his estimation, was to obviate them by bringing forward some universally acceptable rule of conduct. He found it in the traditional, hopeful American proposition about world affairs.

These concepts would serve as the conceptual foundation of the League of Nations, and the League in action would verify the

aspiration. No nation would be admitted "whose people do not control its Government," Wilson declared. Popular sovereignty would be institutionalized in world politics. Strategic concerns would be sent to Coventry along with despotism.

The United States, as we know, turned away from the Wilsonian version of a universal collective security system linked to the triumph of national self-determination and independence. It did not, however, turn to any more finite arrangement for security which would have entailed applying a strategic grasp of reality. Instead, for the time being, the nation reverted to habits appropriate to a bygone time when its strategic concerns had been vicariously attended to. That approach was no longer practical. The League failed. The experiments in tranquilizing Central and Eastern Europe through democratization failed. General war broke out again. Again the United States was drawn in.

That second time the United States engendered strong affirmations and more staying power behind the idea of a universal organization to look after peace in the sequel to victory. The new version was premised on a continuation into times of peace of the coalition prevailing in World War II.

Again, in the hopes of the founders, the venture was supposed to transcend strategic considerations. On his return from the Moscow Conference of 1943, reporting agreement among our principal allies, including the Soviet Union, to go along with the new world organization, Secretary of State Hull promised a world free of all particular and restricted devices—alliances, balances of power, spheres of influence, and the like—"by which nations have tried to ensure their security in the unhappy past." Returning from Yalta a year and a half later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt invoked identical terms.

As the world organization would obviate strategic necessities, so, it was assumed, by the same token the United States could spare itself concern over postwar implications of military dispositions. The main thing was to get the war over with in least time and at least cost in lives and to avoid doing anything to jeopardize realization of the world organization that could iron out the details later. Let strategy confine itself to winning the war. Peace would take care of itself.

Like the earlier version, the renewal of universal collective security reflected a natural and logical idea, but one fated again

to face difficulties when the unity of the principal elements of the prevailing coalition in World War II, assumed as the foundation for the new undertaking, became riven over issues of what to do with the opportunities offered by the victory.

The issues focused initially on the future of Europe, but they reflected opposed versions of the basis of a world order to replace the Europe-centered system which, having served its time, was now rapidly eroding. The main contenders were, of course, the United States and the Soviet Union, each the exponent of ideas lying at the foundations of its existence.

As the first of the colonial positions outside Europe to achieve equal station among the metropolitan powers, the United States saw its mission to be that of showing the way for a world-wide extension of the state system into which it had entered a century and a half before.

The Soviet Union, as the territorial base of a revolutionary movement aimed at subverting the state system, saw an opportunity to realize a goal that had eluded it a quarter century before—that of transforming and subsuming the state system into an entirely new order, with itself at the apex of power.

On taking charge in Russia in 1917, that regime had projected into international relations a set of corollaries derived from the Marxist theory of history. By that theory, the true believers in Marxist dogma were assumed to be entitled to steer particular societies along their predestined courses to a final resolution of all social conflict through the establishment of stable conditions of production that would bring an end to all class conflict under a dictatorship of the proletariat. Communist Russia would function in the world of nations in an analogous role. The ruling group imagined itself to be the forerunner and guide for Communist seizures of power imminently in prospect far and wide as a result of internal collapse induced by war. It would fall to Communist Russia to set and to enforce the pattern for the world's future.

The dream that this would occur in the aftermath of World War I came to naught. Even despair and defeat did not open the way to power for Communists in other lands. Such risings as they attempted either fizzled in a moment or succeeded only briefly. The regime in Russia tried to use its army as a vehicle for spreading Communist rule in a brief invasion of Poland, but

the enterprise aborted with military defeat. The regime turned inward to the harsh tasks of riveting its grip on the one established base and of maintaining a position in a world with which it was neither overtly at war nor quite at peace.

During World War II the Soviet rulership played down its revolutionary outlook while making more or less common cause against the Axis. After the end of hostilities, and notwithstanding wide ruin and privation and a net loss of twenty million lives, the Soviet Union's position and the surrounding circumstances augured for the Soviet rulership the general Communist triumph which had gone glimmering after World War I.

The Soviet Union now stood high in the councils of nations. In victory it had established a pre-eminence unknown to its past. Its massive forces had overrun Eastern Europe and stood deep into Central Europe. The rest of Europe was under its intimidatory shadow, ground down by war's fatigue, destruction, and indignity. Soviet forces also held a northern portion of Iran, some northerly island possessions of Japan, Manchuria, and a major part of Korea. Indigenous Communists had taken over in Yugoslavia and Albania and were harassing China's regime from an extensive stronghold. In many lands, local Communist groups, more numerous than ever, were acting with obstructive presumption as if certain of soon coming to power.

The United States' interim expectation of finding the Soviet Union disposed to relinquish its version of history's laws to suit other people's preferences must have been astonishing to the Soviet rulership. That expectation probably astonished that regime much more than the United States' eventual resolve to shore up positions in Europe still beyond Communist dominance. Indeed, that response probably seemed as inherent and inevitable as would be antagonism on the part of a social class about to be divested toward the class about to become ascendant.

I do not need to recount to you the line of endeavor resorted to by the United States, but I would stress that it has involved finite devices for security of a sort thought to have been relegated to the unhappy past and that the launching of the policies concerned marked the turn when the necessities of strategy first fully entered into the United States' approach to world affairs.

I emphasize also that the line of policy has been a case of embracing the second-best, which, in an aphorism of Bismarck,

is the best that any policy can ever hope to achieve. The policy does not renounce hope of eventually fulfilling the concept of an all-embracing system of security. Spokesmen for United States policy have consistently expressed a desire for the conversion of the Soviet Union and its adherents to better ways consonant with world concord. The United Nations has remained in existence as a ready vehicle for mankind's progress to that cherished goal in event of a change of heart on the other side.

One should stress also the consistency between the policies concerned and the traditional premises of the American approach to external affairs. The point is explicit in the first of the great undertakings--the containment policy enunciated in 1947 in the decision to render military aid assistance to Greece and Turkey, then both under threat from the Soviet Union. The aim is the preservation of independence for other nations. Help is offered. No presumption of taking charge of other positions is entailed. A basic civil morale on the part of beneficiaries is postulated: peoples and regimes concerned are assumed to have an adequate sense of their own identities and the attributes of nationhood.

As a whole, and within its limits, the broad undertaking to salvage Europe has worked as well as one would be entitled to hope. European economies have revived. Morale has been restored. European societies, once enfeebled by depletion and gripped by anxiety, have resumed functioning as going concerns. Fears regarding their external security have been alleviated by an alliance contractually linking the United States' expanses and resources and those of Canada to the European partners' domains in a broad regional security system.

To claim success is not to imply final solutions to strategic problems in that range. Much of your discussion here must have dwelt upon relevant issues still clouding the future--the conditions for permanent collaboration among the European allies, the puzzle of nuclear control and diffusion within the Atlantic alliance, the unanswered questions regarding still divided Germany, the Cyprus riddle, and so on through a complex array. Despite all these vexing problems, Europe has been placed beyond Soviet pressure to a substantial degree and for the time being at least--the main factor of favorable change in the contest of purpose called the Cold War.

Concurrent with this change have come prodigious and dynamic developments in weaponry. In strategy, comprehension has been pushed hard to keep pace with technology. It takes time for the



intellect to absorb what the mind knows in these matters, and even computers cannot help us much. The putative effect, however, has been to reduce drastically the credibility of deliberate decisions on either side to invoke general war as a way of pursuing advantage. Doubtlessly you have speculated upon the implications of this during your sessions here.

Now I shift focus to certain aspects of our adversaries' responses to these developments. This part of my talk brings us to areas full of problems more baffling, and to endeavors less rewarding to us, than those in the Atlantic range.

To the Communist side, the shoring-up of Europe must have appeared as a device to deprive Marxism-Leninism of a rightful inheritance. To that side, the problem has been how to maintain revolutionary momentum, or at least a semblance of it, in the circumstance of finding avenues closed and a prize withdrawn beyond the reach of ambition for the calculable future. To the Communist version of world revolution, the development has posed a problem of keeping its impetus. The ideology has been pressed to save itself from losing all appearance of relevance. Lest the Communist pose of having the keys to the future and being destined to command events should be bereft of all persuasiveness, new opportunities have had to be found, along with new strategies for exploiting them.

The area of new opportunities is what is known, in a currently common phrase, as the third world. It is hard to define. It does not involve a single frame of dominion like the Roman World of ancient history, for example. It does not refer to a specific geographic segment, such as the New World. It does not represent a strain of common culture, as implied when one speaks of the Western World. It reflects no explicit pattern. Indeed, I have noted at least nine different sets of criteria employed in various contexts to determine inclusion in the third world.

I use the phrase as an informal designation to engross a number of states of highly diverse characteristics but one common trait: a lack of stable and developed political character.

I do not say that in a superior and patronizing spirit. There is no litmus-paper test to sort out successful and unsuccessful societies in this regard. No state ever achieves in perfection and finality the solution to problems of internal coherence. The most formidable political societies have to nurture their unity. Probably

no society can afford to count itself immune to the debilitations which I have in mind. The relevant deficiencies are by no means uniform through the so-called third world. Some of the societies concerned seem to stand a fair chance of making good. Others are clearly in a bad way.

To sum up: The third world comprises about half of the states in the contemporary world. For them functioning as going concerns is proving enormously difficult. In a rough aggregate, these states comprise some 30 percent of the earth's population. These states are necessitous. They command perhaps a tenth of the world's productive wealth. Their latent wealth may be much larger than that, but their share of the talents relevant to modernity is small. Their conduct in world affairs is greatly affected by their consciousness of discrepancy between their juridic standing on a plane of equality in the state system and their practical disabilities.

A sense of history from which to draw relevant guidelines applicable to contemporary ambitions may be missing. Identity between peoples and regimes may be weak, so that those exercising authority, and those subject to it, are not agreed or certain about mutual relationships. The foundation of legitimacy is likely to be weak, the concept of allegiance brittle, and the structure of authority dilapidated. Moral alienation is likely to be rife. Such order as obtains is often of a fragile sort relying chiefly on coercion. Even for effective coercion, the instruments may be inadequate. The only catalyst for even a semblance of unity may be to invoke animosity. The traits assumed by Aristotle in expounding the golden mean as the touchstone of a good society may be lacking. In many instances channels of communication, avenues for ready deployment of forces, and means for guarding the periphery may be deficient. In sum, the character of the populace and physical factors afford wide opportunities for internal warfare. When hostile interests hold sway in an adjoining country, the danger is so much the greater.

It would be well worth our time, if we had the time, to assess the relevant dangers in several areas or ranges—South Asia, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean area, and continental Latin America. I shall confine my observations to one considerable range—East Asia, including the southeast portion. Events there have had a considerable bearing on the development of Communist doctrine concerning the third world. In turn, that area is the scene of the clearest present contest between Communist doctrine and the purposes of the United States. I am not

going to unfold the whole story even for that portion of the globe. I am going to call up some recollections about China, Korea, and then Southeast Asia.

Anyone trying to look ahead to the third world problem as of twenty years ago might well have selected China as a prime candidate for inclusion. China's history, the longest among nations, provided little that was relevant to the requirements of the modern world. Recent decades had brought many ordeals in the conflict between tradition and modernity. The difficulties had been enormously aggravated by the years of invasion and occupation leading up to and encompassing World War II. The country had a relatively solid regime in the sense of not being challenged from within the regime itself. Its effectiveness had been eroded over the countryside, however. It faced a formidable challenge from Communist forces with a strong base from which to harry the regime. The state had long been subject to subordinating restrictions with respect to other countries. Victory was supposed to bring it the honor of a place among the great powers—a goal long promoted by the United States, which regarded itself as China's special friend in the world.

The Communist threat increased in proportion as the regime's incapacity to handle the problems of the tired, distraught land was manifested. During four postwar years, United States policy tried one expedient after another in trying to fend off the final debacle. True to our national habit, this Government assumed a golden mean to exist in China—some civic-minded consensus latent in the populace. Only a few fragmentary and timid groups worthy of the description could be found. Another foredoomed hope was that of finding among the Communists some hidden essence that would subordinate revolutionary to national interests—thereby to provide a basis for collaboration between the challengers and the challenged. The Chinese Communists were of no mind to yield on their revolutionary aims to take over the whole position. The United States also tried aid in the form of economic assistance and military equipment and advice. The trouble was that help did not help much.

That is the sum of the rueful account in the United States Government's white paper on China in 1949, after the Communist accession. It is still a fascinating document to read. "Nothing that this country did or could have done within the reasonable limits of its capabilities could have changed that result," is the conclusion reached.

The phrase "reasonable limits" is interesting. Perhaps a commitment and an effort by the United States on the scale of its later undertaking on the periphery of China could have salvaged the situation. I remember Jim Forrestal discussing this possibility with me one day at lunch in 1946. No one will ever know for sure. The white paper recounts the issue whether to involve the United States in China's internal war in the same degree as its involvement in the concurrent effort against armed subversion in Greece. The white paper says this would have required "an advisory group of many thousands, unpredictably large amounts of equipment, and the involvement of United States' advisers in the direction of modern large-scale." The assurance of success was too slim. The white paper adds: "There was no reason to think that the furnishing of additional military assistance would substantially alter the pattern of military developments in China unless a great number of Americans were involved, possibly in actual combat, and unless this Government were prepared to underwrite permanently the success of the Chinese Government's military operations." Such a deployment and such a commitment would have raised an irreducible question of who was to be in charge. To avoid being a tributary, the United States would have had to assume mastery. Implicitly, our traditional inhibitions against finding ourselves in an imperial posture—against taking charge—had much to do with the definition of "reasonable limits."

The white paper of 1949 signs off with some wan hopes: "We continue to believe that, however tragic may be the immediate future of China, and however ruthlessly a major portion of this great people may be exploited by a party in the interest of a foreign imperialism, ultimately the profound civilization and democratic individualism of China will reassert themselves and she will throw off the foreign yoke."

That phrase—"democratic individualism"—is an interesting example of self-projection. I am told that it is untranslatable into Chinese.

By 1950, the United States had liquidated its involvements in East Asia. The containment line was explicitly drawn through a series of offshore positions. While writing off China, it retracted its occupation forces from South Korea. It gave no pledge to protect the regime set up there under United Nations' auspices and at the United States' behest. To have done so would have given juridic standing to the bisecting of Korea at the demarcation between the United States and the Soviet occupation zones.

Conceivably the United States might have left a modest-sized unit on the scene to fly the flag as a keep-out warning. That would have raised the same irreducible question as was implicit in the China situation—the choice between keeping control and losing control.

On whatever terms, the South Korean regime would have preferred alignment with the United States. In retracting its forces and offering no pledge, the United States, instead, implicitly assigned South Korea to the third world. Misestimating the opportunities, the Communists—North Korean elements with obvious but unacknowledged aid and guidance from the Soviet Union—moved across the demarcation line. The aim was to move South Korea out of the third world and into the Communist realm. Much to their astonishment, the attackers found themselves in a war, when the United States acted in instant recognition that it was involved irrespective of the pattern of its preferences and pledges. The unambiguous character of the attack enabled the United States to obtain the United Nations aegis for the countering effort.

While the Russians were sponsors, the attack from the north came a cropper. The Chinese then took a hand, with greater boldness and commitment than the Russians had shown. They reversed the trend, and achieved a standstill. That standstill became the basis of an armistice. The opposing coalition, led by the United States, elected, I believe wisely, to confine the fighting to the Korean peninsula and not to seek a redress of strategic factors in a wider region. That armistice, however, left the United States in a position it had devoutly sought to avoid—with forces on the Asian mainland. It would no longer be a case of trying to assign South Korea to the third world. The ground had to be held. The United States now had responsibilities without dominion. The United Nations' good housekeeping seal helped mitigate the difficulties.

The Korean venture turned out to be the most unsatisfying of wars. It was a vexing and costly fight, under ambiguous conditions and with ambiguous results. It occasioned the extension of the containment policy to the Asian mainland—but with more rue than affirmation. "No more Koreas!" became a watchword in military planning and in civil policy circles—echoing an understandable distaste for getting bogged down in prolonged and ambiguous hostilities and indeterminate responsibilities in marginal and unsatisfactory positions. It remained to be seen whether events would work out to grant the wish.

After the Korean armistice the Chinese were able to redeploy significant amounts of equipment to exploit opportunities in Southeast Asia. In Indochina, French forces had been trying without much success to cope with an indigenous rebellion, supported from China. The issue was not the question of French withdrawal—which was already pledged and scheduled—but the timing and conditions of withdrawal. The rebellion aimed to force the French out and to bar them from any role in arranging the structure to succeed their control. I stress this mainly because the situation has been retrospectively misrepresented at so-called teach-ins, which are this spring's equivalent to tree-sitting and the marathon dance.

During the Korean War the United States had undertaken a large share of the material burden of the French effort. The Chinese inputs after the Korean armistice intensified the fight, and by 1954 the French effort was playing out. The United States was stayed from direct involvement by the counsel: "No more Koreas!" A gesture to stave off the worst by invoking a possibility of nuclear retaliation was not persuasive. So the French gave up.

In an international conference to settle new arrangements in the wake of French dominion, the three lands comprising Indochina—Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam—were recognized in formal independence on their promise to keep out of alliances, to permit no foreign bases on their territory, and to refrain from seeking or receiving military aid beyond prescribed modest limits. Vietnam was divided—a Communist oriented regime in the north, and a non-Communist one in the south. These two were hopefully to decide on a regime to reunite the land in elections two years later. The countries on the outside undertook a general hands-off pledge.

The United States, along with South Vietnam, did not sign the accords but agreed to follow their restrictions. It was anxious to deter further Communist advances. The aim was to provide the component lands a chance to remain in the third world. The Korean precedent was fresh in mind. The omission of a specific defense pledge would not be repeated. The result was a treaty setting up a security system for Southeast Asia, with an accompanying protocol articulating the participants' concern for the independence of the lands of former Indochina. A number of other countries—local and afar—went along with the project, but the source of its substance was to be the military potential of the United States.

Containment was now extended on to difficult ground—no doubt of that. The thought has been voiced by innumerable critics. A fair argument over courses chosen requires appraisal of the choices available. Obviously the United States could have decided to stand aloof from the region in the sequel to the 1954 accords. You can well imagine the recrimination in that event—the protests against irresponsibility in shrugging off a resourceful and populous region, the charges of improvidence in repeating the error of omission made in regard to Korea, and the invidious comparisons between national concern for relatively affluent Europeans and indifference to necessitous Asians.

At this point let us reflect on the inferences as drawn within the Communist establishment from the events I have all too simply recounted.

China's shift from the third world to communism was in its way as momentous as the salvaging of the European position from a drift toward communism. It tripled the numbers of people under Communist rule, added 40 percent to the territorial range, opened up new accesses for Communist operations over a wide arc of South and Southeast Asia, and dispelled assumptions that the Communist thrust had been brought to a standstill.

That shift came somewhat as a surprise to Moscow, which seemed not to have expected it so soon. Indeed, Moscow had tended to neglect the possibilities offered by the third world. Its own dogmatic analysis had prevented foresight concerning the rush toward decolonization—which supposedly could be brought about only by Communist pressure.

In seeking to take advantage of the windfall, the Communists could not count on many other instances of their good fortune in China in having a sizable armed force at their disposal. They would have to make do with what help they could get from other dissident forces, and from inhibitions and doubts in the adversary camp.

The blunder of overt attack across a boundary—which in the Korean instance triggered United States resistance, and enabled it to get United Nations support—must not be repeated. Under conditions attending lower levels of interposition, the American distaste for getting bogged down in far fields will come into play. The sentiment of "No more Koreas!" can be turned to account. So also can the Americans' inhibitions growing out of the

antiimperial tradition, along with trepidation concerning war's potential for slipping its tether—escalation, as the current cliché puts it.

By 1960 they had framed a doctrine. It has become the focus of voluminous theorizing within the Communist realms. Both polar capitals of communism affirm the doctrine, however much they may differ on expedient questions in applying it.

The doctrine is linked to the Communist theme of peaceful coexistence—the pattern of avoiding dangers of general warfare while pushing ideological expansion wherever possible and trying to move events along a course to enhance Communist advantage and to precipitate the historic defeat of non-Communist interests.

In Communist usage, such interests are called imperialist. The term has no necessary link to jurisdictional arrangements. Any resourceful regime or country which is non-Communist is *ipso facto* imperialist. The term colonial is applied analogously. An imperial-colonial relationship, in this lexicon, is simply one between disparately resourceful non-Communist countries, whereas a disparate relationship between a Communist country and any other is by definition nonimperial. Relations between the Western powers and the third world are therefore inherently in the imperial-colonial mold. Anything tending to break up such a relationship is against imperialism and makes for progress toward communism's presumably predestined victory. The third world's destiny is to be recruited into the Communist camp. In forwarding that end, the Communists will make use of whatever short-run allies it can find—a hitchhiker for the time being, intent on taking over the wheel when opportune.

Violence with a purpose of worsening relationships and creating divisions between less advanced and more advanced non-Communist countries is thus called liberating and historically right, and violence the other way around is historically illicit. One side may hit. The other must not hit back. Organized violence tending toward Communist advantage in the mold described is called national liberation war. Communist powers claim a right to foster such wars, and no one is supposed to have a right to hinder them. Peace is a situation free of dangerous levels of violence and conducive to Communist interests. National liberation wars are portrayed as wars for peace. As a corollary, to be peace-loving is to be for national liberation wars.



It is with this set of doctrinal propositions that the containment policy has come to grips in former Indochina as a testing ground. We all know the story from where I left off the account a moment ago: the failure—to no one's real surprise—of the arrangements entered into upon the French withdrawal; the abandonment of the dream of an impartial ballot as a way of unifying two inherently irreconcilable regimes in Vietnam; and the persistence of Communist efforts to pre-empt control in Laos and of the regime in North Vietnam to annex the South on its own terms. These are linked positions: Laos providing a side door into South Vietnam from the north, and South Vietnam presenting a natural avenue to the rest of Southeast Asia. The designs have had support from both polar capitals of communism. Both targeted lands have provided ample opportunity for the doctrine of national liberation war.

Our present focus is on South Vietnam. It has been and remains the scene of pervasive internal strife. Internal strife has provided opportunity for outside Communist intervention. I stress the dual and interactive character of the strife simply because learned professors at teach-ins have argued the matter as if there is something mutually exclusive as between internal strife and intervention, so that evidence pointing to the former precludes possibilities of the latter.

By 1961 the rate of attack against South Vietnam had reached proportions necessitating abandonment of restrictions under the defunct 1954 accord if the position were to be saved at all. Thenceforth the rate of assistance and the proportions of the United States military presence have gone up step-by-step, matched by the rate of effort from the other side. By the spring of this year the United States resorted to a line of effort it had previously renounced—selective bombing forays against the north. These have been accompanied by proffers of negotiation, with a promise of largesse to the North Vietnamese regime in return for its desistance from collaboration in the Communist program of national liberation wars as applied to South Vietnam.

The approach reflects two basic hopes. The first is that of inducing North Vietnam, by a mixture of reward and punishment, to opt for a drift toward a third-world position and away from the Communist camp and to leave its neighbor alone in that spirit. The second is that of finding the Soviet Union disposed to renounce tacitly, at least in this instance, its adherence to the doctrine of national liberation wars lest it contribute too greatly to the enhancement of its Chinese rival for ascendancy within the Communist realm.

Without venturing too far into prophecy, I think it proper to warn you against an excess of confidence in either of these two possibilities. Meanwhile, unless something gives, the indications point to a prospect of indeterminate involvement for American forces in an East Asian position additional to the one south of the armistice line aslant the 38th parallel. Such an inference is implicit in the expansion, increment by increment, of the United States ground forces deployed to South Vietnam. Whatever our preferences, events may not accommodate the wish of "No more Koreas!" In this instance it is not possible to count on anything equivalent to the mitigating effects of the United Nations emblem covering the position in Korea. I should not wish to tell you that the attendant problems will be easy.

The circumstances are, to the contrary, likely to be full of vexations. They will provide a hard test for the national spirit. The adversary will wring every advantage he can out of his own system of nomenclature, whereby any exercise of power to impede Communist purposes is imperialist. This will find responses even among men of good will in our own society—as evidenced by the teach-in phenomenon.

Commentators will deplore the tribulations inherent in the contested terrain. They will voice their preferences for a strong stand at some more appealing and commodious barricade somewhere else at a later time. The fastidious will pine for a more immaculate ally—endowed with such competence and civic morale that our help would not be called for.

The answer, of course, is that the preferable positions are not now the ones under challenge. The challenges as they arise from here on will all be ambiguous, vexatious, unappealing.

This point I would add to my observations concerning the strategic view at the outset of these remarks. "The Nature of Things," as James Gould Cozzens tells us in *Guard of Honor* "abhors a drawn line and loves a hodgepodge, resists consistency, and despises a drama." This is the nature of things in the strategists' world, to be sure. The policy-maker is never entitled to walk away from a problem on the ground that it is too full of difficulties and has no right even to exist.

## **BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH**

**The Honorable Paul H. Nitze  
Secretary of the Navy**

Mr. Nitze was graduated from Harvard University in 1928 with a B.A. Degree, cum laude.

In 1942 he left his position as Vice President of Dillon Road and Company to become the Financial Director of the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. From 1943 to 1944 he was Director of the Foreign Economic Administration, and from 1944 to 1946, he served as Vice Chairman of the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, for which service he was awarded the Medal of Merit by President Truman.

From 1946 to 1953, Mr. Nitze served with the Department of State, moving from the position of Deputy Director, Office of International Trade Policy, to Deputy to the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. In 1949 he joined the Policy Planning Staff of that Department as Deputy Director and in 1950 became Director of that Staff, a position he occupied until 1953.

He then served concurrently as President of the Foreign Service Educational Foundation and Associate of the Washington Center of Foreign Policy Research of the School of Advanced International Studies.

Mr. Nitze was appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) by President Kennedy, taking his oath of office in 1961. In 1963, he was appointed Secretary of the Navy, the position he has served in since.