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National Purpose and National Goals

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National Purpose and National Goals

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Introduction and Summary

It is becoming fashionable to attribute our problems to a lack, or loss, of a sense of national purpose, that intangible quality that invests the condition of being an American with meaning and direction, that underlies our nation's pride, confidence, morale, and will-power. We have created the most affluent society in human history, only to be denounced as materialists -by our sons. We have shown the rest of the world how to achieve a modern society in freedom, but the international environment is more hostile and lowering than ever before in our history. What is the point of our achievement? To what purpose?

In the next chapter of this essay I shall attempt to demonstrate two basic points:

First, if one looks at how we behave, rather than what we say, one sees that we have always had a coherent sense of national purpose and still do today. Second, this sense of purpose is just as valid for the present and the future as it ever was for the past.

The reason our old-fashioned sense of purpose refuses to become obsolete in a wildly changing world is that beyond sheer survival, beyond even our cherished concept of liberty, progress is itself our purpose. We have established ourselves as the pilot project for the rest of humanity, the place where the forces that will transform the whole world tomorrow are being unleashed today. We are out front in the evolutionary process. Our purpose is to stay there.

Our present confusion and disunity results from our success not our failure. Until now the main thrust of human evolution has been along lines of increasing control over the natural environment. Now we are at last

turning a climactic corner, with our scientific knowledge and our capability of manipulating nature expanding at exponentially increasing rates. The primordial adversary has been effectively defeated. We have irrevocably changed the world around us.

In this changed world the Calvinist ethic we learned in our youth no longer applies. Our young people perceive this more clearly than we do. There is a crucially important inference we must draw here. We who have so radically changed the world around us must now effect equally radical changes in the ways in which we perceive progress. New criteria are needed for a new world. Only thus can we rediscover our purpose. It is the lot of our generation to be the keystone of a long arch of human evolution, joining the generations who were unable to perceive the future with those that will be unable fully to comprehend the past.

I believe that modern criteria of progress can be discerned in that growing school of thought known as scientific humanism. Such criteria relate to the increasing political and economic unification of the species; to the preservation and improvement, as opposed to the conquest, of the natural environment; to the increased understanding of man's biological strengths and weaknesses; to the optimisation of man's numbers; and to the exploration of space.

This theoretical foundation provides me a point of departure for a review of the international and domestic challenges we face. I am led by its logic toward the following thoughts, which together constitute one possible version of a broad-brush vision of the future, a new "manifest destiny" for America for the balance of this century and the first few decades of the next.

First, there is the international environment and the question of how our nation should relate to it in the future:

—For the next few years the only prudent strategy for minimising the threat of nuclear devastation is for us to maintain a strong deterrent posture. But in the long run, this is inadequate. The present strategic environment will not endure indefinitely. Fortunately a militant Marx-Leninist philosophy is also unlikely to endure indefinitely in the enemy heartland, the Soviet Union. Structural changes in the Cold War relationship will develop which will ultimately, given skillful American leadership, make possible the crucial evolutionary step of supranational control over weapons of mass destruction.

—Our ultimate political goal (in the sense of being the farthest one we can now perceive) should be a post-national world order eliminating war but encouraging pluralism and congenial to the principles of liberty and open societies for which we stand. If we remain the leaders of the human evolutionary process, and if we can see to it that unity is achieved through negotiation and assent rather than coercion, this is a goal the world can achieve during the twenty-first century,

—The road to supranational control of nuclear weapons and then to a post-national world order lies in the first instance through increasing integration of the industrialised countries of the north, rather than through either bilateral US-Soviet agreement or through the direct transformation of the United Nations into a world government.

—During the last three decades of this century our interests in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America will remain

important, albeit somewhat less so than our primary task of integrating the developed north. Each developing country and region is unique; so are our constellation of interests there, and our best strategy for supporting those interests. Somehow we must learn to get along without sweeping generalisations, formulae, and box scores, to dispense with misleading concepts like isolationism vs. interventionism, and to pursue our several regional interests with more continuity and bite. Gradually, if we and the other developed nations continue to do our jobs, the younger nations will evolve to the point where they can participate responsibly in a post-national world order.

—The issue of race and poverty is deeply dividing our nation. We urgently need to achieve a broad national consensus on a definition of the kind of society we want to become. This paper argues that elimination of racial discrimination is at least as much a political as an economic problem. At the same time, in defining our goals we must consider predictable technological requirements of our post-industrial society as well as the crucial race question. If we can agree that what we are trying to do is create a new kind of society, setting the pace once again for the rest of the world, we ought to be able to dispel our guilt and confusion, and approach our task purposefully and confidently.

—The spectacle of rebellious youth is annoying but less serious, for our own society at any rate. (For some other countries, where access to political power is less widespread, the ultimate consequence of present student revolts and youthful alienation may be the complete transformation of their national purpose and

national goals). In our society there are two elements to the problem: those of our youth who are reacting to turbulence and perceived injustice by appointing themselves agents of change; and that portion of our youth who have been overcome by change, becoming its victims not agents, and withdrawing to opiates and numb mysticism.

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If my analysis has any merit, the national political leadership is in a position to do the nation a singular service by elevating our broad consensus on purpose from the nation's viscera to its cerebral cortex. It is time for the nation to reaffirm its purpose and to reunite around goals that have shucked off the baggage of the past, that relate cogently to the kind of future that present change makes possible. In so doing we need to restrain our impatience, recalling that evolution neither occurs overnight, nor everywhere at once. But patience is not complacency: we remain humanity's single best hope for the future. It is high time for us to reunite and get on with the job.

A Common Sense View of Our National Purpose

Given the lack of a sustained and intelligent public discussion of our national purpose, it is easy to gain the impression that we don't have any, or that if we ever did, we have lost it. There is much to support this impression in the statements of various outspoken elements of our society.

For example, there is a very widespread stratum of conservative American opinion, nurtured on Calvinist ethics and an essentially rural view of how our society should be structured, that is constantly being outraged by a whole series of symptoms of urbanization and rapid social change, from ghetto disorders, hippies, and various pollutants at home to all kinds of irritating involvements and miscellaneous misdemeanors abroad. Many Americans who hold variants of these views draw a kind of masochistic solace from asserting that the country has gone to pot, that it has lost its morality, and so forth—which is very similar to saying it has lost its sense of purpose.

By contrast, the dominant liberal-urban view seems to be that we ought to have a sense of purpose but haven't been able to find it and proceed accordingly. The tendency here is to define national purpose rather more narrowly and positively than does the conservative. Thus the liberal scolds the nation for not eliminating our racial inequities and our areas of deep poverty, and attributes this alleged failure to the fact we are drifting and haven't been able to muster the determination to tackle what is our true mission in life.

A third view, proclaimed to the heavens by our rebellious youth, is that the Establishment that runs our country is stupid, hypocritical, and

morally stunted; that our involvement in Vietnam is boundlessly evil; and that life generally has no visible purpose at all, at least under present management.

There exist, of course, many combinations, variations, and shadings of these and similar opinions, but the present analysis has no need for a further elaboration of the contours of our national discontent. We all know that these forms of dissatisfaction exist, and that they are deep-seated and widespread.

I believe that seldom in history have so many otherwise intelligent people been so thoroughly misguided about a fundamental aspect of their existence as are Americans today on this subject of national purpose. For my observations have led me to conclude that whether we recognise it or not, and whether we deserve it or not, our nation does in fact operate on the basis of a common sense definition of our national purpose that is capable of serving us as well in these turbulent times as it has in the past. How can a majority of Americans bemoan the lack of a sense of purpose while simultaneously operating as part of a broad consensus that agrees on one? The answer, as I shall attempt to demonstrate, is that the latter consensus hasn't been sufficiently examined in a rational way, and thus remains largely a visceral feeling that manifests itself less in what people say than in how they react to given stimuli.

If my hunch is correct, it suggests that our national political leadership is in a position to do the country a singular service by elevating the national consensus on purpose from the nation's viscera to its cerebral cortex.

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On those relatively infrequent occasions when the nation's leaders have attempted to describe our national purpose in their public statements, their formulations have tended to revolve around the two elements of national survival and the preservation of our liberty. For an example, let me cite an admirably succinct version by Under Secretary of State Katzenbach: "The basic objective of our foreign policy is the security of the United States and the preservation of our freedoms.^{1/}

Other formulations may be pointed more toward our purpose as it affects specifically domestic problems (e.g., some statements cite the preservation of liberties for all citizens, the expansion of their opportunities and the enrichment of their lives). But whether the specific formulation at hand is pointed mainly at foreign or domestic concerns, the twin concepts of survival as a nation and the preservation of our freedoms are absolutely fundamental. Each is so basic that the question of whether it relates more to foreign or domestic concerns is irrelevant - each one permeates and underlies both.

The concept of national survival needs no elaboration. It is fundamental to the purpose of every viable nation state.

The concept of freedom, by contrast, merits further analysis. It is a Jeffersonian concept; although its philosophical origins antedate our existence as a nation, and although many other nations are now guided by it, it is particularly and peculiarly ours. In the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights we announced that we were creating a nation on the premise of the dignity, the equality, and the freedom of the individual human being - a basis for political organization that was at least as

revolutionary in the eighteenth century as communism has ever been in the twentieth. We went ahead and created that nation and it flourished.

The United States has been a seminal factor in world evolution ever since. Our political system has inspired innovators and revolutionaries all over the world; it still does, despite communist efforts to steal our thunder. Our economic philosophy encouraged fabulous growth in the nineteenth century, and our capacity for institutional as well as technical innovation enabled us to take quantum jumps in the twentieth to the point where Mother Europe now fears we are about to buy her out. In this century the existence and the occasional application of US military strength has critically influenced the world balance of power time and again.

By any objective standard, the United States has had an explosive impact on the course of human evolution during the relatively brief historical span of its existence. We did not invent the concept of individual liberty and dignity - but we did provide the laboratory in which that idea won its spurs. Many of the basic inventions which made the Model T Ford possible occurred elsewhere - but we discovered mass assembly for a mass market and parlayed the principle into mass affluence - with an assist from a labor movement that could only have existed in a free society. We built the atomic bomb, though most of the basic research was done in Europe. The Germans built a rocket to bomb London and a scant generation later we despatched three emissaries on a trip around the moon, visually accompanied by half the world, thanks to mass media mostly made in the USA.

This is not a digression: our success story relates to our sense of national purpose both directly and .via our basic belief in freedom. For we

have proven that freedom is a highly catalytic ingredient when it comes to human progress. To be sure, we are fortunate that our predecessors were a restless and energetic lot moving into a rich and empty subcontinent. With such a start we would probably have become wealthy and powerful under almost any doctrine or ideology, as long as we remained united. But to be the laboratory for all humanity, the place where things are happening today that will take everyone else by storm tomorrow -- that is something else entirely. And that something else can be attributed primarily to the "common sense" view held by our forefathers, as it still is by us, that our purpose as a nation rests on the concept of individual liberty.

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"If we follow the main line of cultural development from the point in history at which our information becomes clear enough to let us reconstruct institutions, we see that it has always moved through the medium of cultures in which individual enterprise has been at a premium, and in which the political institution has existed only in order to give structure to other institutions, such as the economic, familial, religious, and associational. In Sumeria, from which we inherit more than we do from Egypt, merchants were free men and schools were private. Among the Phoenicians also private enterprise was the rule, as it was among the Greeks... ." ^{2/}

While the principles that govern the biological evolution of a species of plant or animal are different from those we can infer about the social evolution of our species since the dawn of history, in some respects the two processes are analogous. Neither one is predictable in any specific sense. But in terms of general principles, each involves a trend toward increasingly sophisticated organization in the face of that abstract universal tendency to

run down, to become formless, to degenerate into anarchy which is called entropy. I understand that some of our most profound thinkers, such as Albert Einstein, have discerned in this principle of a force opposed to entropy a satisfactory modern basis for a belief in God. If this same concept is translated into the more familiar terms of "belief in progress", we can recognize it for what it actually is, an article of faith for a very large number of Americans.

We Americans believe that because of our liberty we have progress. We believe that tyrannies and rigid ideologies stifle innovations except for those judged doctrinally sound. By contrast, we Americans believe in letting every kind of innovation have a chance to prove itself, just as nature does with mutations. Because we lack a specific architectural plan for the future ordering of human society, we are the ones who are creating that society. Because communism does have such a plan it is destined to keep on trying to catch up with us. We have proven the advantages of welcoming any innovation that works while keeping our view of the future relatively unstructured. By comparison, communism has proven a dismal failure. (Imagine the nightmare of Byzantine bureaucratic rigidities to which Soviet Russia would have sunk by now were it not for the American challenge).

In 1957, when the USSR orbited the first Sputnik, the initial response of the American nation was one of incredulity and shock. It was not that we begrudged the Russians their success, although in the dawning age of strategic missile systems, the security implications were serious. Rather it seemed incongruous to us and just plain wrong that someone else should be out in front in an area of such importance to future human progress.

After we overcame our initial shock, we buckled down and overcame the Soviet lead. As of this writing we are ahead in the race to the moon. Sputnik challenged us as nothing else has done in our time; and our response demonstrated that Sputnik was destined to remain the exception rather than becoming the rule.

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The foregoing thoughts suggest that it is inadequate to limit our "common sense" formulation of national purpose strictly to the twin bases of survival and liberty. Liberty as applied in practical terms has meant an open society where progress has flourished as never before. Our progress in turn has sharpened threats to our survival by creating disparities, jealousies, and acute growing pains both at home and abroad. But this same progress has also provided us with the capacity for world leadership, the economic resources, and the military strength which together provide us our assurance against being submerged in a turbulent world in which we find ourselves vastly outnumbered.

Let me therefore propose the following formulation as representing the core elements of America's national purpose as felt, if not articulated, by the majority of American citizens:

Our purpose is to preserve our nation, to maintain our open society based on the premise of the liberty, equality, and dignity of the individual; and to continue to strive for a better world, thereby ensuring that we remain the world's leader in the evolution of human society.

In other words, we're out front. Our purpose is to stay there. This requires, above all, our survival as a nation and the preservation of our open society based on individual liberty.

Now let us take a quick look at the world to which this sense of purpose must relate.

The Social Sound Barrier

Every major technological or institutional innovation introduced into human society creates secondary and tertiary effects that ripple through that entire society, requiring a series of readjustments so complex and imperceptible that neither the innovator himself, nor the society in which he operates, can foresee them, except perhaps in the broadest sort of outline. In previous centuries such innovations were usually infrequent enough to allow people to adjust to them over more or less extended periods of time. But now, although the length of a human life span or generation cycle has not changed much, the pace at which innovations are being introduced has increased exponentially. Instead of being confronted with ripples of change, we find ourselves whiplashed and tossed about by towering waves of revolutions, seemingly coming at us from all directions. Take, for example, the following chart:

The vertical axis could represent the size of the world's population over the centuries. Or the amount of energy the individual has commanded. Or the speed of communications, or the rate of change of weapons systems, or the number of people doing scientific research, or any of a dozen other indices. The point is that in terms of frequency of introduction of seminal innovation, human society has turned a corner quite recently

and is pointed in a different direction from that to which it has always been accustomed in the past.

Cynics observing this kind of graph have suggested that mankind is on the verge of blowing up the planet, of committing suicide in one terminal incandescent release of pure energy. I have seen no calculations but I suspect that the combined arsenals of the nuclear weapons states are very nearly sufficient to produce something approaching this result right now. But I cannot believe that nuclear extermination is necessarily going to be the end result of the long and laborious evolutionary process that has brought us to our present state. As a citizen of the country that has been primarily responsible for the recent increase in the world's rate of progress, I am emotionally committed to the proposition that such progress is inherently desirable.

Let me propose, as an alternative to the imminent holocaust theory, that the United States is now leading the rest of humanity through a kind of social sound barrier. Although the turbulence and shock waves assaulting us are almost overwhelming, there is in fact a future ahead of us. We cannot postulate the nature of this future with any clarity, but I think we can reasonably assume that in it, the kinds of indices I have suggested above will no longer be particularly relevant as gauges of human progress.

It seems to me that the primary evolutionary thrust of our species to date has been in the direction of achieving ever greater control over our natural environment, and that the present social sound barrier is little more than a reflection of the fact that at long last we have succeeded in obtaining virtual supremacy over our primordial adversary.

As Hegel would have predicted, our success has opened up a new panorama of problems, but like the former armies of France, we remain conceptually organised to fight the last war. The challenge that faces the present generation of American leaders is to reconstitute our values and objectives as fundamentally as our fathers and we have transformed and expanded our control over our environment.

The kinds of criteria or indices that will become relevant as gauges of progress as we push our way past the present social sound barrier are likely to include:

---Steps toward the political and economic unification of our species which will eventually eliminate the threat of nuclear holocaust, reverse global and regional trends toward increased arms expenditures, and so integrate the world's economies as to maximise the world-wide utilisation of natural resources for the benefit of all.

---Meeting modern society's growing needs for social controls while preserving basic freedoms.

---Increased understanding of human origins; of the biological parameters within which we operate; and of other aspects of self-understanding such as the mechanisms of life, heredity, and intelligence.

—Optimization of man's numbers.

—Restoration of the natural environment in terms of man's biological and aesthetic needs.

—Exploration of outer space.

Beyond Deterrence

The Soviet Nuclear Threat

The possibility of a major nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union necessarily occupies a very special place in our strategic thinking. Such an exchange would not constitute a war in any known sense; that minority of our citizens who might survive at least the initial salvo and counter-salvo would be unlikely to draw much comfort from the thought that the enemy's losses might be even greater. The American experiment would be at best crippled; and if, when the exchange took place, our Civil Defense shelter program were as paralyzed as at present, our nation would probably be to all effects and purposes destroyed.

But if it is contrary to our purpose as a nation to let ourselves get blown up, it is equally so to let our enemies nibble us to death. There is no easy way out of the dilemma of the H-bomb.

The American response to this central problem of our time has been cogent and to the point. Present strategic doctrine has evolved through experience, experimentation, purposeful technological innovation, and clear thinking about fundamentals.

This doctrine is grounded in the concepts of containment, collective security, deterrence, and flexible response. Each of these concepts is well understood and needs only brief comment here.

The containment concept expresses our interest in maintaining the territorial status quo against communist military or paramilitary probes or pressures anywhere along the long Eurasian boundary between the communist states and their neighbors. In this sense, the concept has

served us well.^{*} In another sense—that of preventing the communist countries from using aid and other non-violent techniques to develop positions of influence on a state-to-state basis with countries outside their periphery—the concept has contributed more confusion than clarity, as I shall discuss later.

Collective security is the alliance structure that governs the way in which we share the burden of containment with-like-minded nations.

Deterrence assumes that Kremlin leadership, while hostile, is rational and prudent. Therefore, as long as we retain a credible capability to cripple the USSR even if the Soviets launch a nuclear attack against us first, we can reckon with a high probability that no such attack will be launched.

The other basic concept, that of flexible response, recognizes our need to maintain forces capable of fighting limited wars, both conventional and unconventional, so that we can respond effectively and credibly to a range of possible hostile initiatives short of nuclear or total war.

These concepts are logical, simple, and mutually reinforcing. Thanks largely to them, our strategic posture toward the USSR is about as sound as we can expect it to be. We are keeping up our end of a nuclear balance of terror that has enough inherent stability to allow us to get on with the business of pressing through this social sound barrier I have been

^{*} This endorsement is admittedly more controversial as applied to our role in Vietnam than it is in regard to our past and present roles in West Berlin, Europe generally, Korea, Greece and Turkey, and so forth. Rather than argue the merits and demerits of our role in Vietnam in this paper, I should prefer to let history—and the outcome of pending peace talks—decide. For a strong statement of the rationale for applying the containment policy to Vietnam, see Senator Gale McGee's recent book, *The Responsibilities of Power*.

talking about, without worrying too much about getting blown up, as long as the present strategic environment remains essentially unchanged.

That, of course, is the problem. We have no assurance that the present strategic environment will endure. In fact, given the accelerating rate of social and technological change taking place around us, it would seem only prudent to assume that the next serious challenge, the next Cuba-missile-type cliffhanger, will be coming along in perhaps a few more years or less.

The next crisis could result from a collision of our interests with those of the USSR in a region of tension in the developing world. The Arab-Israel tragedy is on the front burner at present but other candidates are gestating. We can expect the Soviets like ourselves to exercise considerable caution when direct confrontation threatens, but the game will remain dangerous and tricky for many years.

Or the next crisis could develop as a result of a technological breakthrough by the USSR that shifted the strategic balance in its favor. This unpleasant possibility is unfortunately a real one, one that compels us to maintain a high level of investment in all kinds of basic and applied research of direct or indirect military application. (Thanks largely to the cost of Vietnam, we have probably not been spending enough on military r&d, especially basic research, in recent years).

And then we have the generation gap and the problems of predicting how leaders will act under stress. What will the younger generation of East Germans want, and do, after Ulbricht? and how will the Kremlin handle itself? How will the party bureaucrats in the Kremlin cope with the inevitably

growing pressures to restructure political power, within the USSR? What will the Chinese be up to a few years from now?

We cannot foretell the future with any precision. But it does seem both reasonable and prudent to be thinking right now, with as much precision as possible, about the light at the end of the tunnel. By that I mean the achievement of a guarantee of immunity from nuclear attack that will be more durable and less likely to be upset by some unforeseen development than the present balance of terror.

The Light at the End of the Tunnel

In the long run there really is only one way out— supranational control over the world's nuclear arsenals. This means in the first instance, and at a minimum, some arrangement, including both the US and the USSR, which sufficiently dilutes national control over nuclear arsenals as to make it impossible for either superpower to deploy its arsenal against the other.

Any such arrangement is clearly a long way off, and will become possible only after basic structural changes in the present cold war relationship occur. If the Soviets offered us some such arrangement tomorrow we should be acutely embarrassed, and the mood in other NATO capitals would approach consternation. But we are not talking about tomorrow. We are talking, I should estimate, about the last two decades of the twentieth century. By 1980 the outlook and prospects should be very different—if we live that long. Meanwhile we have to keep our powder dry, basically through maintaining a strong deterrent posture.

A look at the major forces at work in the world today suggests that by about 1980 the ideological gulf separating Mother Russia from Western Europe and the USA may well have undergone massive erosion. As I have implied in my section on the "social sound barrier", human evolution is leaving the old ideologies behind: while America debates whether God is dead, pundits like Brzezinski proclaim that communism is dead. Such reports are premature but probably prophetic, for it is the creative minds and the youth on both sides of the Curtain that are decamping, leaving the old religions to the bureaucrats and the traditionalists.

Our youth is in anarchic rebellion while Soviet youth is apathetic. But on each side a few creative intellects of an older generation are working toward what might be called a philosophy of scientific humanism, which looks at the world in terms of the sorts of forward-looking values and standards I listed a few pages ago. Sir Julian Huxley is an outstanding Western spokesman for this school, while Academician Sakharov's remarkable essay last summer shows it is taking root in the Soviet Union too. When youth on both sides of the Curtain discovers purpose, what shall it be, a concept that binds the present to the future, or one that merely helps explain the past?

Change never proceeds smoothly, even in America, which is better equipped to handle it than any other society in history. The liberal ferment in the USSR is unlikely to break into the power structure without convulsions. Control in the Soviet Union is still exercised with considerable skill and firmness by party bureaucrats whose personal survival depends on maintenance of the old ideological and cold war dogmas. But not even the CPSU can withstand the present tide indefinitely, and it is reasonable to

hope that after a convulsive and dangerous decade we shall by 1980 find ourselves dealing with a Soviet Government whose purposes and objectives are significantly more compatible with ours than at present. We shall still have conflicting national interests, but we should find it much easier than now to debate them reasonably and cooperate in resolving them.

This liberal ferment will not, of course, be confined to the two superpowers but will in one form or another touch every human with access to a radio. The phenomenon of presently purposeless youth eventually finding some attachment beyond nationalism will, however, generally obtain only in countries where nationalism has already largely served its purpose, that is, the modern industrial states. It will take a lot more than a decade for the youth of most of the developing lands of Africa, Asia, and Latin America to learn to lift their sights to a comparable degree.

But the probability that liberal ferment will proceed along roughly parallel tracks throughout the area of what George Ball calls "The Three and a Half Superpowers"^{4/} provides some glimmering as to the most practical means of working ourselves out from under the Damocletian sword of deterrence.

The route to supranationalism that I believe current historical tides favor lies in the direction of increasingly close association between the modern industrial states, notably the United States, Europe, the USSR, and Japan. As the gap between East and West diminishes during the 1970's, that between North and South will inevitably widen. The sense of shared interests within the "rich men's club" will be strengthened both by the increasingly obvious need for cooperation between all "club" members in

efforts to cope with the problems of the poor countries, and by mutual Soviet-US revulsion over the next two or three near-collisions of our interests in strategic "third world" areas. (The Cuban missile crisis, it will be recalled, had a major impact on Soviet world strategy and was not without effect on ours).

Meanwhile we have the strong supporting factor of economic interpenetration, "The American Challenge" as Servan - Schreiber has described it. Our technological progress to date has increased the optimum size of corporate production units to a subcontinental scale. Our progress in the '70's may push the optimum even further. I need not spell out the arguments here but the economics of producing goods and services increasingly press the developed countries towards supranationalism.

So do the economics of military self-sufficiency. When only two countries in the world can afford to be self-supporting in the entire range of hardware a modern military establishment requires, how can the rest consider themselves truly independent? And now the ABM issue is beginning to pose the question of whether even the superpowers can continue to pay the mounting costs of national rather than international security.

Specific political and strategic problems that now appear insoluble will also provide impetus during the 1970's to move toward consolidating the "rich man's club." Chief of these is German reunification, another Damocletian sword, particularly for the Russians, soluble only in the context of a larger rapprochement.,

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There are alternatives to the basic approach of seeking supranationalism in the first instance through closer association of the developed nations. At one extreme we have the idea of seeking a special bilateral relationship with the USSR, a kind of "US-Soviet condominium." The other extreme would be to seek to bring all nations under effective supranational authority more or less simultaneously, presumably through strengthening the UN. Neither alternative, however, stands up under analysis.

The condominium approach, if seriously entertained by either or both superpowers, would be opposed by just about everybody else, particularly in Europe and Japan, as a threat to their interests. The combined opposition could prove highly effective in thwarting any significant agreement. An additional problem would be the difficulty of negotiating the bilateral differences between us in a purely bilateral as opposed to multilateral context. To be sure, we have already found bilateral agreement possible on certain specifics like the Nonproliferation Treaty. But the kinds of protracted negotiations and accommodations that will eventually achieve a basic restructuring of the present Cold War relationship will almost certainly require a larger forum, with more actors on the stage, more scope for maneuver, compromise, and multiple horse-trading.

The problems that attach to the other extreme seem even more formidable. It can reasonably be argued that the massive influx of relatively small and unsophisticated new nations into the UN during the past ten years or so has eliminated the possibility of a major UN role in bringing about the kinds of developments among the industrial nations of the north that I have been talking about. For these young nations, together with the

other developing countries, now effectively dominate the UN in the sense that they largely determine what it shall concern itself with, even if they cannot control everything it does. And their primary concerns are a lot closer to home than the central issue of survival in the nuclear age that preoccupies us. Thus the UN is turning into an international institution for the care and feeding of adolescent and pre-adolescent nations. I do not say this critically, for this is an extremely important task and one for which the UN has unique advantages. But I fail to see how the UN as presently structured can provide either the leadership or the power to cajole or force the United States, the Soviet Union, and the other nuclear weapons states to give up their unilateral controls over their respective nuclear arsenals — although it may, from time to time, provide a useful forum for some of the negotiations and discussions carried on at great-power initiative.

The Post-national World Order

Once the US and the Soviet Union agree to commit their nuclear arsenals to some supranational authority, mankind will have reached a climactic threshold in the political evolution of the species. From then on the road to a post-national world order eliminating war generally will become negotiable. It may take several generations fully to absorb all the brawling junior nations into the same supranational structures that regulate the affairs of the post-national societies of the developed north, but the ultimate issue will never be in much doubt.

If this is the trend we seek, we should be certain it is really in our interest, and consistent with our national purpose.

Let us begin with fundamentals. Progress, in terms of the political, social, and economic evolution of our species, proceeds relentlessly in the

direction of increasing institutional complexity and largeness. It seems quite clear that in terms of political organization, humanity is in fact marching in the direction of the unification of our entire species. As a nation dedicated to progress, we should favor this trend. But wouldn't the submergence of our sovereignty in larger political structures (assuming for the moment we can get there) be contrary to our fundamental purpose of self-preservation?

It seems to me that this contradiction in our purposes is more apparent than real, and can be dissipated by relating the totality of our purpose as previously defined to a closer examination of what kind of world order we are talking about.

It would clearly be contrary to our national purpose were we to allow our national identity to be submerged in a coercive world regime able and willing to enforce a specific doctrine or ideology on all member units. The situation could look quite different, however, were this regime to be structured federally or confederally, and were it to be guided by a sense of purpose similar to that which we now have as a nation. In other words, I believe it would be very much in our interest to transfer some of our sovereignty to supranational institutions if those institutions were so structured and inspired as to encourage and support the principle of open societies based on the premise of individual liberty. This would be particularly true if we occupied a position of influence within them comparable to the importance of our role in bringing them into existence. And I think it very reasonable to assume that this would in fact be the case, provided that we were still out front in the evolutionary process during the period in which this ultimate political evolution occurred, and provided that it

occurred as the end result of a process of negotiation and consent rather than coercion.

In other words, if the United States, true to its purpose, can lead the world to a freely negotiated supranational world order, it will be the kind of order within which we can continue to flourish.

If the unification is achieved in spite of us it will in all probability spell the end of us as the kind of nation we are and wish to continue to be.

In the very long run, I doubt whether we have any third alternative.

* * * * *

National Strategy and The Developing Countries

We present an ambivalent face to the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Drawing on the attenuated analogy of our own national origin, we sympathize, within limits, with their generally anti-colonial posture. As the world's leading exponent of progress, we sympathize with their avowed objective of modernization, and have done quite a bit to help it along. As a deeply humanitarian people, we are concerned—sometimes more than they are—with the poverty, disease, ignorance, and traditionalism that hold them back. As the leading power facing the communist challenge, we have an almost infinite variety of security concerns that intertwine and frequently conflict with their own interests. As a mercantile and manufacturing nation, we are interested in markets, investment opportunities, and sources of supply.

In recent years a new and contrary trend has been emerging which is characteristic more of the American public and Congress than of the executive branch. This is a trend not toward increasing interest but toward disinterest. We look on this ocean of humanity and can't discern patterns. Their governments are erratic, unreliable, ungrateful, ineffectual. It looks like they'll starve pretty soon if they don't stop breeding, and we won't be able to do very much about it. Their problems are overwhelming. We've done our best to help for two decades now and look what it's accomplished. We have problems closer to home which perhaps we can solve if we put first things first. Anyway, they're not all going communist. Let's take the next decade off.

Nowhere are these ambiguities and inconsistencies more clearly revealed than in the post-war history of our programs of economic and military aid, which I believe merit separate attention at this point.

AID: A (Basket) Case History

Our aid strategies toward the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America have evolved over the course of the last twenty years from very short-sighted ones based on false analogies and ignorance to only slightly less short-sighted ones, based on slightly more knowledge accompanied by great confusion over purpose. We still have a long way to go before we succeed as a nation in sorting out just what we want to do, and why.

The success of the Marshall Plan got us off to a bad start. We figured out what was needed to get Europe on its feet, we anted up, got the job done, and got out. Ten years later I still could hear highly placed American statesmen argue that it worked in Europe and it would work in struggling country X if we would only act with similar resolve. Of course, this was nonsense because struggling X was in its natural condition whereas Europe's prostration had been unnatural. But as Americans we were predisposed to favor any plan that offered quick and clear-cut solutions, particularly when this meant progress, so we found it easy to gloss over the falseness of the analogy.

The simple fact is that most societies, like most individuals, resist change; underdeveloped societies resist development; and the calculations and predictions of the perspective planners and econometricians in the early years of our aid effort were, therefore, fantasies that almost always

proved very far off the mark. Modernization can and does occur, but at a much slower pace than our expectations led us to believe. *

One result of these false expectations was that programs that were well designed and making steady progress were perceived by most Americans as failures. Another result was interference in the efficacy of our aid, inasmuch as our approach to the government of the country being helped generally reflected an impatience that interfered both with sound planning and with the development of a truly cooperative relationship.

Our second grand fallacy started in the middle 1950's when the Soviet Union declared co-existence and launched what seemed like a devilishly clever maneuver to leapfrog the Nato/Cento/Seato barrier by offering aid and trade to supposedly innocent and susceptible struggling young countries in the developing regions. I clearly recall that as the 1950's turned into the 1960's the attitude within the State Department was one of considerable concern. The fear—widely shared by the American public and Congress—was that once the Communists bought their way in to a position of influence on the government-to-government level with some naive young country, they would somehow be able to "take over" through clever orchestration of their new assets with the indigenous communist party and associated front groups. For a while it looked as though this was indeed happening in countries like Guinea and Ghana; we saw the world map getting pinker by the moment; and those cynics who did venture the opinion

* The fact that our society is almost unique in its predilection for change gives us a singularly astigmatic view of traditional societies.

that all was not as bad as it looked were crushed by reference to the example of Cuba.*

During this period our aid program was oversold to Congress and the American public as a "vital" instrument for combating communism. This proved to be nonsense, as it became clear that the developing countries cherished their independence and freedom of action far more than they did the aid being offered them. They could be bought, but as long as there was an alternate source of aid, they wouldn't stay bought. In some countries it became almost standard practice to accept a big Soviet loan one week and incarcerate the local communists the next. Such countries tended to be even-handed, however, in that they soon learned to treat us as shabbily as they did our competitors. As seen by a thoroughly disenchanted American public, therefore, many of our clients rapidly became expert at playing both sides of the street, treating each benefactor as though he were being done a favor when his money was accepted, and even attempting to endow the practice with high moral overtones, by calling it neutralism.

We are now in the sloughs of a national aid hangover. Those of us who have been involved in the details of trying to uphold our national interest in the developing countries know that economic and military aid programs can be extremely useful instruments. We know that the present starvation ration Congress has put us on is significantly hurting the national interest. But somehow we just cannot explain why, in terms that are both persuasive and reasonably accurate. (The present official stress on such

* A somewhat false one, as we have now come to realize.

concepts as self-help and limiting the number of aid recipients is strictly defensive, a holding action designed to keep Congress from cutting us off completely.)

Part of the problem is the multiplicity of specific national interests served by our aid programs. Just as each developing country is unique, so is the U.S. interest in that country, and so are the reasons why that interest may be served by one or another kind of aid. Actually there is no such thing as aid in the abstract: it exists only in the context of given political/economic/social environments and given congeries of US interests. The AID administration does, of course, use many general categories and other conceptual tools to classify aid and how it is used without reference to specific countries, but it has been my experience that these efforts at classification impair rather than advance program efficiency in terms of actual results on the ground. An effective program is generally one that has been hand-crafted to the local situation despite general instructions from headquarters. An effective presentation to Congress must however rely mainly on generalisations. Each requirement impairs the other, and the resultant stress guarantees the continuance of a credibility gap as between what Congress hears in session and sees on field trips.

Areas of Conceptual Confusion

The specific misconceptions described above are unfortunately only illustrative. There are other, more profound areas of confusion which permeate our national attitude toward the developing countries. For example:

—Does our national purpose require us to expend resources to strengthen democratic forces abroad? Or should we concentrate on improving

democracy at home, and thereby become an ever more shining, example to others? In pursuing our interests with country X, how much weight should we give to its form of government?'

—Is it morally improper to allow abject poverty, disease, discrimination, and violence to continue to flourish on our crowded planet without trying to do something about it? Even if we deny a moral obligation, does our self-interest require us to act?

—Must we continue to act as the world's policeman? How did we get into the Vietnam imbroglio, was it worth it, and where do we go from here? Can we and should we seek to control regional violence everywhere? What should we be doing about communist influence? Just what is our security interest in the underdeveloped world anyway?

—Which is more important, stability or progress?

—Which is more important to our national interest, the modern nations of Europe, the Soviet Bloc and Japan, or the developing nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America?

—Which is better, intervention or isolationism?



Any effort to suggest coherent answers to these questions is bound to be somewhat controversial in the present disputatious climate of American opinion. The emotionalism of many intelligent Americans on the general subject of the developing countries is exacerbated by the fact that most of the questions I have posed relate in more or less subtle ways to domestic questions of race and poverty that are in the process of converting us into a nation of nervous wrecks. Nevertheless, if the

preceding analysis has any merit, it should help in the formulation of answers that at least will have the merit of being somewhat consistent with each other and with our general sense of national purpose as defined here.

Intervention vs. Isolation: These twin concepts, based as they are on gross oversimplification, have done yeoman service over the decades to confuse several generations of Americans and to dilute the effectiveness of our efforts to promote our foreign interests. At present the damage they are doing relates primarily to our thinking about the less developed countries.

If we could forget that these concepts existed we should find it easier to bear certain constants in mind. The first is that we are impelled by the inescapability of our power and by our will to survive on a shrinking planet to involve ourselves with considerable intimacy in the affairs of many of the nations of the world. The second is that there is no general formula that can tell us what the optimum degree of our involvement may be for individual nations; as in our aid strategies, that can only be determined on a case-by-case basis. The problem lies in the fact that the nation's mood tends to express itself in isolationist or interventionist terms and in so doing invests operational significance in inherently meaningless concepts. The effect is invariably bad.

When the national mood is isolationist the nation is unwilling to provide the resources we need for a reasoned and balanced pursuit of our interests abroad, particularly in the developing countries. By inaction we present opportunities for our adversaries, and then over-react when they exploit them.

When the mood is interventionist we sally forth as if on a crusade, trying to do too much too soon, and saturate the planet with advice and

good intentions. When our advice is ignored (often quite properly) and our expectations are disappointed, the hangover sets in.

Thus we progress from binge to hangover and back to binge again in a monotonous cycle whose period is on roughly the same scale as that of generational shifts in our leadership. Any corporate executive who ran his company's affairs in like fashion would quite properly be fired.

North vs South: It seems clear to me that we should give first priority to that area which will determine the answer to the central question of our time: survival in the nuclear age. This means that all else being equal, progress toward supranationalism in the north is more important to us at this stage in human evolution than a comparable degree of progress in the south toward the general objective of catching up in the modernization process. Nevertheless, we have major interests in various underdeveloped areas to which we should continue to attach high priority. Some of these interests relate more or less directly to the prospects for supranationalism in the north, while others are of considerable intrinsic importance. In short, we have a big stake in the developing countries too.

Stability vs Progress: Traditional societies are generally less well-equipped to comprehend and cope with change than are modern ones, particularly ours. In such societies, therefore, revolution is frequently the only route anyone can devise for loosening up an ossified power structure sufficiently to permit rapid evolution. But revolution is usually contrary to well-defined US interests, despite our general interest in progress. Each modernizing society is unique, and in some the problem confronts us less starkly in others, but we do sense a need for more effective ways of promoting bloodless change. Perhaps our experience with our own race

and poverty problems during the next few years will help. Meanwhile about the best we can do is keep up our guard against pat answers, and judge every country situation on its own merits.

Must We Police the World? Here again, we tend to confuse ourselves through oversimplification. We have specific security interests almost everywhere, unique to each country and region. Some are more important than others. If we keep a clear-eyed view of what's at stake we shall know how strongly to fight for each interest. It is my personal opinion, for whatever it is worth, that my Government knew what it was doing when it got into Vietnam, and that it still knows what it is doing now, while it is trying to get out. The tragedy of it all is the probability that the outlook of a whole generation of Americans has been so distorted that for decades to come our nation's ability to act wisely in a variety of problem areas will be degraded by irrational associations with the Vietnam experience.

The one area where our proclivity for pat answers seems to be giving way to a more pragmatic assessment of our interests is in our reaction to Soviet Bloc aid programs. We are learning to play the influence game more economically in those countries where the objective is mainly influence, and to tolerate, perhaps even welcome, Soviet resource inputs in countries like India where the objective is mainly that of development.

The rules of the influence game are simple. In effect, they say that given the client state's propensity to maintain its independence and freedom of action, any effort to buy control over it will be very costly and also risky. Control can be defined as that point at which one patron achieves enough influence over the client to be able to manage the client's relations with the other patron. Even if this occurs, and it almost never

does, the population of the client state is likely to be so agitated over its government's incompetence and perfidy at selling the national birthright as to render that government's tenure dubious unless it backslides. Thus either patron can prevent the other one from gaining control at a cost that is minimal compared to the cost of gaining control itself.

Now that both the US and the USSR have grasped these rules, the costs of competition have gone down substantially without impairing either side's security interest significantly.

Nevertheless, this gentlemanly *pas de deux* can take on ominous aspects when regional conflict erupts between countries backed though not controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union. In the future as in the past, we will need all the skill and judgment we can muster to handle such situations in ways that neither run excessive risk of confrontation nor sacrifice important regional interests. As noted earlier, there is an inherent logic in such situations which virtually forces the US and the USSR to play chicken with each other; this is one of the more cogent reasons for looking for a better long-range answer than deterrence to the prospect of future superpower conflict.

The War on Poverty: The spectacle of human suffering abroad is one that Americans throughout our history have tended to regard with compassion and concern. However, our willingness to back our concern with action has been less than constant. As I have noted, we have passed through a post-war era of generosity and are now in an unusually curmudgeonly mood, with certain Congressmen playing the pre-Christmas role of Scrooge almost line by line.

Our aid programs to the developing countries were never based on compassionate grounds to the best of my knowledge, nor should they have been. They are designed among other things to assist in the modernization process. This is rather different from licking the poverty problem, as our highly modernized nation with its ghettos ought to know. But part of the current public disaffection for our aid program is based on the notion that it has been a kind of international welfare program and it hasn't worked.

My own feeling is that we should all agree that while a certain amount of charity is good for us, the ultimate effort to eradicate poverty everywhere can be assigned to our grandchildren. We and our children have already received quite a few assignments in earlier parts of this essay and I haven't even gotten to our domestic problems yet. But here again, we should bow to the infinite variety of the country situations we face, and recognize the need for pragmatism. We will undoubtedly face repeated instances during the coming decades to which we can only respond with magnanimity if we are to remain true to our national character.

Propagating Democracy Abroad: One of the things one learns with experience about transitional societies is that democracy as we practice it is frequently, though not always, ill-suited to a given developing country's social values, to its political habits, and to what General de Gaulle would call its "national personality." It seems to me that if we expend our available capital, in terms of influence and dollars, on the task of trying to ram democracy down such a society's throat, we are spending those resources unwisely. One might also conclude that in our messianic fervor we were contravening a basic tenet of our view of a desirable world order, which is explicitly pluralistic, and even that we were trying the same trick of force-

feeding our ideology to others that we condemn when the USSR practices it.

On the other hand it is in our interest that democracy flourish in those developing countries where the indigenous climate makes this practicable. Eventually we shall live in a more or less politically unified world, and the quality, the prevailing political philosophy of the day, will be a resultant of the philosophies of all the constituent parts. Our role in determining this resultant will hopefully be disproportionately large, but unless we are shooting for Pax Americana we should not expect it to be controlling. We therefore have a stake in helping democracy survive in those countries, developed or undeveloped, where our help can make a difference.

The outstanding case in the underdeveloped two thirds of the world is India, where genuine democracy has shown considerable durability, and which by itself constitutes perhaps a third or more of all transitional people outside China. But there are other countries also, where we have pragmatic reasons for including the strengthening of or preservation of democracy among our significant interests. As with other questions, we should be selective, and wary of general rules.

* * * * *

I have stressed that a rational view of our interests in the developing countries has generally been hindered by the unrequited public demand for box scores, pat answers, and other magic formulae. I should also point out that we get along as well as we do in the developing countries primarily because the professionals in our executive branch (and in certain Congressional subcommittees and private special interest groups)

generally develop and pursue handcrafted country-by-country strategies rather than letting themselves be guided by broad principles.

But if it is true that we should eschew general principles, then what is the point of worrying about our national purpose, and the direction in which our nation is moving? The answer to this is that even a hand-crafted country strategy needs some sense of direction. And I believe that the kind of rational public discussion of purpose and direction I have been advocating could lead to greater continuity,

For example, if we could agree explicitly that progress is fundamental to our purpose, we might stop flagellating ourselves about the brain drain and welcome, not discourage, the influx of genuinely creative foreigners who correctly recognize that their innovative talents can flourish in America as nowhere else.

If we could agree on the kind of world we wish to see develop in the twenty-first century we might put more emphasis on propagating the English language as the future universal tongue.

We certainly would intensify present efforts to help the developing countries control their population explosion. The imbalance between death control and birth control is easily the world's number two problem now; it will automatically become number one when we bring weapons of mass destruction under supranational control.

The Special Problem of China

I have described as an ultimate national objective a world government dedicated to pluralism and individual liberty, congenial to open societies such as ours. China will eventually have to belong. Just how

history will jockey it to such a position from its present condition of snarling xenophobia is a question I cannot begin to answer.

Will China continue, at least through the 1970's, its hostility toward both the US and the USSR? (If so, it might provide the common enemy we might need for the final breakthrough on committing our nuclear weapons to a common supranational command).^{*} Or will it seek and obtain rapprochement to some degree or other with the USSR, with us, or with both? How long has Mao's revolution postponed the day when China can claim great-power status? How has Mao's remarkable campaign against the party apparatus altered evolutionary trends in China generally, and the attitudes of the younger generation in particular? Will China's view of the outside world improve, or will it remain the gross, Marx-Middle Kingdom distortion it is today?

Since I possess neither the knowledge nor the temerity to attempt even general answers to such questions as these, I can only fall back on what the Chinese themselves say is going to happen. As we know, current Chinese doctrine is based on an analogy to Mao's experience as a guerrilla in developing the Chinese countryside as a base for subsequent conquest of the country as a whole. Thus Maoism foresees the gradual strengthening of the developing countries under Chinese leadership, to the point where they can finally engulf the developed countries of the north and usher in the millennium of the world communist paradise, presumably as ordered and

^{*}One possible step: Chinese weapons advances that would militate in favor of our cooperating with the USSR, Japan, and India in ringing China's borders with a single, integrated, early warning/ABM system. This is not very much more than what China is already accusing us of.

inspired everywhere by Mao's thought.

I did not notice it until I was well along towards the completion of this essay, but the Chinese global strategy as outlined above is almost a mirror image or obverse of the long-term strategy for America which I have previously proposed. In each case, a congenial form of world government is perceived as the goal of the evolutionary process, but the intermediate step of mobilising half of it is upside down for the Chinese.

The apprehension with which I might view the Chinese grand design is moderated by a couple of doubts about its premises. For one thing I question an assumption that underlies the engulfment concept, namely that gross overpopulation can somehow be turned into a strategic asset in this mechanized age. For another, it is difficult to see quite how the Chinese are going to unite the present swarm of brawling young nations into a sufficiently coherent array to make even the attempt at engulfment possible. History strongly suggests that the young countries still trying to consolidate their nationalism are less likely to achieve unity soon than are the older nations of the north which are already being impelled by the forces of evolution toward transnational institutions—unless the northern nations wipe themselves out through nuclear suicide.

The Chinese do, however, have a potentially dangerous weapon which a balanced consideration of their strategy ought to consider. That is race, which the Chinese, with total disregard for the biological facts,^{*} are trying to use to create a sense of community of injury embracing everyone who is not a white-skinned Caucasian. So far this is not a serious threat,

^{*}Not to mention their own highly developed sense of racial superiority.*

but it could conceivably become one if our own domestic racial situation deteriorates, if racial tensions explode in southern Africa, and if the sum total of human misery in the less developed countries continues to increase in stark contrast to ever-increasing opulence in the north.

Whatever happens, we can count on the developing countries of the world providing us with a lot of headaches during the next twenty or thirty years, and in all probability the Chinese will be doing their best to increase them during most if not all of this period. But the Chinese grand design will have little chance of succeeding if the developed countries continue to pursue their interests with their southern neighbors in a reasonably enlightened and generous fashion.

While pressing toward supranationalism, the various northern states with established interests in individual developing countries will need to maintain and strengthen these links. An increasing trend toward multilateralising the efforts of the northern states can both strengthen the general trend toward supranationalism in the north and strengthen the bridges connecting it with the south. Meanwhile the UN can continue to function as a subtle and versatile instrument for easing the growing pains of the younger nations, provided it continues to receive solid support from the US and other developed countries.

The Home Front

America has always been a contentious place to live, but today it is deeply divided, to an extent that is perhaps unparalleled in its history. Our people are fracturing along lines separating affluent from poor, black from white, liberal from conservative, young from old. These divisions, to be sure, have always existed, but they seem to be taking on new and harsher dimensions as we press our way through the social sound barrier and find our old goals and values increasingly irrelevant.

Race and Poverty: The recent intensification of the national dispute over race and poverty derives in part from our achievement, for the first time in human history, of a situation in which affluence is the norm rather than the exception. Since World War II we have achieved a kind of standard cultural and economic level characterized *by* relatively high purchasing power, mobility, and standards of education which have become normal for the majority of Americans throughout the nation.

It is human nature to focus on the exceptional. In the roaring '20's and the depressed '30's the "American Dream" revolved around the concept of the individual's acquiring great wealth—a notion that strikes most of us as somewhat immoral today. Now the idealists among us clamor for the eradication of poverty, of making the old-fashioned dream of affluence available for all of us. Unfortunately, it is not all that simple. The relatively high degree of coincidence between the impoverished and the Negro has transformed what might have been a reasonably straightforward economic proposition into the most emotionally charged, divisive, and misunderstood domestic issue we have ever faced as a nation. The high Negro crime rate adds to the righteousness of the white conservative, while the liberal white

sees his black constituency slipping away from him as the idea of black power spreads. The three-cornered debate waxes shriller and more bitter every year, while our cities go on smoldering and the spectre of major racial conflict edges ever closer.

We urgently need to find some common ground that can bring together everyone, black as well as white, who wishes our country well and who wants to see it emerge from present racial conflict strong and unified. The noise level of the present dispute makes it difficult even to know where to look for such common ground, much less to describe it. Nevertheless, I am emboldened by the preceding analysis to suggest that the key to the solution of the present crisis may lie in a national effort to describe and define the salient characteristics of the kind of society we want to become. Let us first try to figure out our destination—in other words, our national domestic goal—and then we may find it easier to agree on how to get there.

It is only very recently that it has become possible to envision an intelligent national debate on our race problem. Until our ghettos started burning and black power emerged as a significant political force, the overwhelming majority of our white population nursed an irresistible subconscious compulsion to sweep the whole subject under the rug. The rationalizations were marvelous to behold that we all employed to avoid facing up to the contradictions between our egalitarian beliefs and our discriminatory practices. Race, as a subject for polite middle-class conversation, was taboo, except in terms of ritualistic formulas expressing one or another variation of the rationalized conventional wisdom.

But the blacks themselves have changed all that, with some help from the mass media and our iconoclastic offspring. Watts was too big to sweep under any rug. The average American white has finally become convinced that the situation can no longer be papered over and that drastic action is urgently needed—though most of us are still a bit unsure whether to feel guilty, as the liberals are urging, or resentful, like the incurably committed white supremacists. Shades of the old rationalizations continue to distort our thinking, but nonetheless, after a century of living with myths, the time has come when we can, if we choose, contemplate the national navel and dispassionately decide what we want to make of ourselves.

There are very early signs on the horizon that the process I am advocating is beginning, that Americans of various persuasions are trying harder to look beyond the present confusion. We may even be seeing the nascent beginnings of a process of convergence amongst various nebulous points of view as to what our goal ought to be.

Thus we no longer hear much talk about the desirability of homogenizing our population to some light coffee-colored condition. Nor does the notion of an independent black political entity somewhere down south get much support. It seems that most of us have decided, implicitly at least, that race is a durable aspect of American pluralism, that we must narrow down our range of "solutions" to those that recognise that our racial differences are here to stay.

Perhaps what we really want is to emerge from present racial conflict with a society that allows all Americans to take pride in our racial diversity, and even to enjoy this dimension of our pluralism, rather than being tormented by it.

But our goal needs to be defined with greater precision before it can do us much good. One of the main issues we must soon resolve is whether the black's root problem is exclusively or even primarily economic. We whites pay lip service to the idea that the equality of opportunity to which our nation is dedicated embraces all aspects of the individual's existence. But now that we have had our noses rubbed in the fact that equality is a farce for most blacks, our first reaction has been to reach for our checkbook. How much? One has the impression that this reaction has not been confined to individuals, but has also characterised much of our government's recent policies.

I have no wish to argue against the necessity of our providing very substantial amounts of money to attack poverty in our slums and ghettos, to improve black education, and so forth. But I think we are deluding ourselves if we think we can lick our race problem exclusively through some kind of domestic program of economic assistance. To do so would simply be to launch another binge/hangover cycle like that which has characterized our international aid effort. The black power advocates have logic and historical precedent on their side when they argue that the problem is basically more political than economic. I conclude that white charity alone can never be more than a palliative, and that a cure is possible only if the black community can somehow lay its hands on a reasonable share of the political power that controls this nation's destiny.

If this is so (and the popular appeal, within the black community, of the black power concept seems likely to make it so), we can refine our earlier definition of our goal as follows: We want a society where our black community shares political power with the whites, as well as having equal

access to employment opportunities and education, where in effect the black American has access to the same sources of pride and dignity that feed the egos of successful whites.

This may be about as far as we can go toward defining our goal without taking account of other factors that will necessarily influence the shape and character of our future society. The most obvious such factor is the trend toward automation and away from manual labor. Clearly, our future society will have to make the most of every scrap of mental talent born into it. The post-industrial society we are becoming will have no place for hod carriers, ditch-diggers, and functional illiterates. On the other hand, it will never have enough scientists, or engineers and managers, or artists and philosophers. This means among other things that we must somehow learn how to dismantle the psychological walls that surround our ghettos, as well as the economic and political ones. For we must be able to ensure that every citizen that has been genetically endowed with a capability of becoming educated to a socially useful level not only be given the opportunity to do so but be motivated to do so.

By the same token our society will continue to produce some individuals, black as well as white, who are at best only marginally educable by any known technique. Increasingly, these individuals will be unable to find a useful place in society and therefore will have to be cared for as wards of the state. I would hope that as our society progresses toward genuine racial equality, it will develop enough self-confidence and unity to devise ways of consciously discouraging those individuals of any race who are demonstrably incapable of producing, from reproducing.

What I have in mind are ways of relating welfare payments to restraint in reproduction that are permissive rather than coercive, leaving the decision to the individual. This general approach is already on trial in India, where financial incentives and disincentives are used in various ways to back up an extensive government effort to disseminate free contraceptive equipment.* But if we are to follow such a course it seems to me it is essential that we do so with the concurrence and active support of the responsible leaders of the groups most directly affected, notably the Negroes. Any effort to bring about significant decreases in the birth rates of our impoverished groups that does not involve their full concurrence and support would be totally out of character for us as a nation and would tend to increase rather than reduce racial conflict.

It would probably be premature to start right now to attempt to bring about changes in our welfare programs specifically designed to link payments to restraint in reproduction. The political climate is unready for such a step. In any case I see such a direct linkage not as something to be achieved overnight but as the end result of a gradual process that proceeds in parallel with increasingly effective steps to ensure that every individual born into an underprivileged environment be given maximum opportunity

* The New York Times of Sept, 12, 1968, for example, reports one such variation now in use in the Indian state of Maharashtra. This variation differs from the less subtle direct financial incentive or bribe most Indian states offer to the adult male willing to undergo irreversible vasectomy. It rests on the concept that Indian families who used to get many social services free now have to pay on a graduated scale if they have three or more children. In our more affluent society I should think the procedure would best be inverted, i.e., pay all welfare recipients a certain minimum living allowance, with bonuses to those willing to forego reproduction for some agreed period. Recent advances in reversible medium-term contraceptive techniques make such an approach more feasible than it might have been in years past.

and incentive to break out of it.

It is probably not, however, too early to take action to correct the anomaly that presently exists of abnormally high birth rates—which seem to be running very much above the national average—in urban ghettos and rural slums. This anomaly apparently results from inadequate dissemination of birth control information and materials on the one hand, and from anachronistic welfare regulations on the other. Some recent social studies strongly suggest that present welfare regulations have the effect of rewarding the matriarch of the fatherless family for her continuing production of mostly illegitimate offspring, who are often unwanted despite the government money they bring.^{5/} Efforts to bring ghetto birth rates down to something approximating the national average by correcting both these causes ought to be seen as efforts to reduce, not advance, race discrimination. But white leaders seem reluctant to grasp this nettle, presumably because they are gun-shy about the predictable frothy accusations of "genocide" that they would face from the black's radical fringe. It seems to me that responsible black leaders could take a significant step toward building the climate of cooperation our country needs by publicly advocating the kind of measures I have suggested.

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The analogy I drew a couple of pages ago between our attitude toward foreign aid and our approach toward domestic welfare programs reflects a pervasive relationship between our race and poverty problems at home and our major concerns abroad, particularly with the developing countries.

Our main domestic problems during the 1970's are to exorcise racial hostility, to achieve a state of durable and constructive coexistence between black and white, and to begin the process of shaping the human material our society consists of to the technological, esthetic .and philosophical requirements of a post-industrial civilization. This is not very different in its fundamental attributes from the problems our children and grandchildren will face after we have retired from the scene, and they are charged with the task of helping absorb the less developed portions of the world into a post-national global structure such as I have previously described.

If we can create racial harmony in our society without massive bloodletting we shall once again have carved out a new step in the evolutionary staircase that the rest of the world can follow. If in the process we learn how to overcome the sullen despair of the congenitally excluded, and how to motivate them to fight for a place in the main stream, we shall have provided invaluable illumination for many other nations with similar problems. (Our candlepower will be augmented to the extent that our privileged majority can set an example as to how a group possessing power can work out peaceful mechanisms for yielding a part of it to those who have been shut out.) If we can demonstrate the feasibility of controlling our natural increase in eugenically desirable directions, without sacrificing our democratic principles, we shall have blazed a trail the whole world can follow to solve the massive problem of global over-population.

Nothing exists in isolation. We are what our historical experience makes of us. It has not been preordained that we shall continue to lead the world; this is something we shall have to earn in the future as in the past. If

we cannot find modern solutions to the domestic challenges that lie immediately ahead of us, the rest of the world will perceive our failure and look elsewhere for leadership. And correctly so, for we shall have failed to become the kind of society that is fit and qualified to lead humanity into the next millennium. Our dream of leading the rest of the world into a pluralistic world order, freed of the threat of nuclear devastation, will fade. Our interests will suffer almost everywhere, in a variety of subtle ways-.

But there is no need for failure if we are clear as to our purpose and goals. I have no sympathy for the hangdog attitude of many of my liberal friends who approach our race problems in a condition of guilt and self-doubt. Nor, of course, for that other extreme of the white spectrum that professes, ostrich-like, that only a return to status quo ante makes sense. The only groups who seem to have much inkling of contemporary essences are some of our more enlightened blacks, and our youth. It is time the rest of us woke up and recognised that what we have to do now is create a new kind of society. If we can perceive our task in this light, we shall approach its solution with all the pride and confidence, all the energy, all the innovative talent, that we are already showing in the important but relatively less urgent task of putting a man on the moon.

The Generation Gap: As if we didn't have enough troubles, the young Americans we fondly expected to lead our nation into the next millenium seem to have developed an acute and incomprehensible form of collective insanity. This disease is confined largely to the offspring of relatively affluent parents, and we still have a sufficient supply of old-fashioned boys to field an army in Vietnam. But the fact that so many young Americans

who are attending our higher institutions of learning are smitten is deeply disturbing. Their physical appearance, their predilection for pot, and their presumptuous rejection of any and all experience acquired by their elders is bad enough. Their tendency to undertake destructive political action on a mass scale, and to espouse rag-tag philosophies based on anarchism, existentialism, and even Hindu mysticism makes one wonder for the future of the nation.

Some observers see the present confrontation as an essentially normal expression of generational conflict in turbulent times, comparable to, say, Russian student unrest in the 1890's.^{6/} There is undoubtedly both merit and wisdom in the "plus ca change" approach, but I cannot help thinking that in our case, something new has been added. That is, in generational conflict that has occurred in earlier times, and to a considerable extent is occurring now in developing countries, the students are functioning as agents of change, and are rebelling against rigidities in the conventional wisdom of their elders that stand in the way of change. In our case, however, youth tends to be at least as much the victim of change as its agent. For nowhere else has youth ever grown up in a world so fundamentally different, in both technological and institutional senses, from the world in which its parents grew up. Television alone, which was first widely introduced in America around 1950, has given that generation of Americans that spent its childhood looking at it a world view so different from ours that it is extremely difficult for us to comprehend.* And the

*Readers of mettle may study Marshall McLuhan's complex analysis of why TV has a totally different and more inclusive impact than radio or the printed word, in his masterpiece of inspired obfuscation, *The Medium is the Message*.

spectacle of mass affluence hasn't merely eroded Calvinism, it has done it in entirety. Meanwhile, space has crumpled with the universalization of the automobile and the replacement of the postal system by the telephone. New math and other educational advances compound the linguistic blocks interposed between adolescent and parent by the normal development of teen-age jargon.

So what we really see about us is the intertwining of two kinds of youthful rebellion, one normal in the context of historical experience and the other one relatively new. The more normal one expresses itself after the frenzied fashion of youth everywhere in opposition to perceived ignobility, hypocrisy, and injustice, usually in the context of our race problems and the war in Vietnam. The other strand is that of the young American who has been pummeled by forces of change he perceives but does not understand. He has been unable to discern any wisdom, any sense of direction, from elders who themselves may be confused and may not even perceive the changes as clearly as he does. Completely adrift and convinced that life is meaningless, he falls back on escapism, frequently using drugs and espousing some kind of mysticism as means of rejecting the world.

Either of these phenomena would be irritating enough; the combination of the revolt on the campus and the hippy costume is enough to send any red-blooded American veteran of World War II straight up the wall. But if we try to look at the totality of the problem with some objectivity, I think we can readily perceive that it is not as serious as either our domestic race problems or the major problems we face abroad. The young idealist berating the establishment and screaming for change will find

before he gets much older that change is indeed happening at about as fast a rate as the nation can take, that everyone is genuinely concerned about racial injustice, and that we're getting out of Vietnam anyway. Furthermore he'll find that he's lucky enough to have grown up in a political system that maximizes the individual's access to political power. He will soon find something useful to do and settle down, in all probability.

The hippie and related refugee types will probably have to figure out for themselves that life does have a purpose. We can help them out, perhaps, to the extent that we develop the kind of dialogue about national purpose that I have been advocating, but in the last analysis they'll have to salvage themselves. Some won't make it, but those who do opt to drop out permanently will at least oblige the nation by removing themselves from our breeding population through their commitment to LSD and other gene-destroying drugs. So the hippie phenomenon is likely to disfigure the American landscape only transiently, at least in its present form.

I am less sanguine about the ability of certain other countries to emerge relatively unscathed from the crises they are increasingly facing with their own youth. I suspect that as a general proposition, those countries where there is the least social flexibility and in which the opportunities for genuine participation in the political process are most restricted are going to have the most trouble. It will be particularly interesting and relevant to our primary concerns to see how the confrontation between generations unfolds in the USSR.

Conclusions

Our belief in liberty and our belief in progress have combined with the accidents of history to make us a very special people. We have developed technology and human institutions which give us virtually complete dominance over the national environment. We have achieved a capability to eliminate human poverty, at least in our own society. And we have done this primarily through a process of assent and negotiation, not coercion.

As we stand on the threshold of a new era of material plenty we find ourselves suffused with doubts as seldom before in our history. We used to know where we were going, but now that we have almost gotten there we are plagued with uncertainty as to whether the destination was the right one. Our economy of almost a trillion dollars a year hasn't solved our race problem and our youth take for granted, even disdain, the material affluence we worked so hard to win for them. We haven't been able to buy real security in this nuclear age, nor solve the problems of the developing countries. Were we wrong all the time? What is right in this bewildering world?

The first conclusion I draw from preceding analysis is that it is high time for us as a nation to decide on a rethinking of our long-term goals and strategies. Disunity will take longer to kill us as a nation than a strategic nuclear attack, but it can do the job nearly as effectively in the long run. To avoid it we need concepts describing the great challenges of our times and how we propose to deal with them that a sizable majority of Americans can agree on. At present the only such challenge on which we can agree is the Soviet strategic threat, and even there our consensus is limited to short-

term aspects of the problem. For the others—race, the generation gap, the developing countries—we are floundering.

My second conclusion is that our sense of identity and our basic sense of purpose are conceptually adequate to the task, that the challenges we face, however formidable, do not require us to transform our basic character, as, say, Turkey transformed itself under Ataturk, and as the Soviet Union will transform itself when it eventually abandons Marx-Leninism for some humanist version of socialism. We need more articulate and informed discussion of our national purpose, so that we can be more explicitly guided by it than at present. But the twin concepts of liberty and progress can, as I stated at the beginning, serve us every bit as well in the present and in the future as they have in the past. For we are the innovators, the creators, and the prime agents of change for all humanity. We are the pilot project. That is our purpose and as long as we stay free and out front, we shall be true to our purpose.

I have suggested various areas in which our basic sense of purpose may be called on to provide guidance regarding our goals at home and abroad. In so doing I have been troubled by the possibility of being misunderstood because of what I consider the principal weakness of the American character—our impatience. When, for example, I suggest submergence of national sovereignties in a global political system as a desirable goal for the twenty-first century, I do not mean to suggest that a task force should be set up at once to recommend how to act now to start us on the road there. This is such a far-off goal that current policy decisions should be guided by it only nebulously if at all. If we have kept our powder dry, and acted with prudence and strength in the meantime, perhaps by

1980 or 1990 we can start thinking of the goal in more specific terms. After all, as I have noted, one of the strengths of our outlook has always been that our view of the future has remained relatively unstructured. We had a concept of manifest destiny, for example, but no specific blueprint as to how to acquire and domesticate our subcontinent. I think we should follow a similar approach with regard to global federation, at least at this stage.

And we must bear in mind that human evolution always proceeds unevenly.

A given evolutionary step does not normally happen everywhere at once: its start is localised in place and time. The more complex and efficient type of society that results spreads outward gradually and unevenly. Thus two or more levels of human evolution can readily coexist at any given point in time. The situation is transitional but then human society has always been in transition. As long as civilisation has existed, it has coexisted with barbarism and savagery (though at present the population of the dwindling pockets of savagery here and there in the world is shrinking almost below the numbers of cultural anthropologists interested in studying it).

The present orderly division of society into more or less homogenized nation states presents a superficial quality of uniformity which is both illusory and contrary to the main stream of human experience. The fact is that the locus or core area of a more advanced form of society does not normally have the resources to bring everyone else in whatever geographical unit is involved into its orbit except over a protracted period.

The two geographical units we are involved in today are, first, our own nation, and, second, the globe. We have the will and the capability to

solve our race and poverty problems, to describe our goals In ways that can fire our younger leaders, to lead the industrialised countries past the final spasms of nationalism and communism, and ultimately to lead all humanity into a pluralistic federation. But we cannot do it all at once, and we shouldn't expect to. We need a sense of direction but we also need a sense of timing. First things first.

What this nation needs to do above all at this stage is to reaffirm to itself that even though the environment is changing radically, we remain the single best thing that ever happened to the human race, and it's up to us to get on with the job.

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