

## *UN Traps for U.S. Policy*

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THE UNITED NATIONS, in its present form, represents several dangerous traps and pitfalls for the development of a sound and realistic United States foreign policy. Perhaps the most obvious of these traps is the persistent inclination of some Americans, especially in academic and intellectual circles, to regard the UN as it might be in an ideal world, not as it is in the world of 1966.

One of the most deepseated of these illusions is to regard the UN as an instrument for enforcing world peace through world law, a task for which, as reason and experience both testify, it lacks both the will and the means. The first condition of effective law is that it be voluntarily accepted by a substantial majority of the people who live under it. This condition clearly does not apply in a world profoundly divided by deep ideological cleavages.

One need only look back to Nikita Khrushchev's attempts to justify the brutal suppression of the Hungarian people's struggle for freedom in 1956 to realize that there are no common standards or definitions shared by Communist and non-Communist powers. To the majority of people in the West the Hungarian workers and students of 1956 who came out with improvised weapons against Soviet tanks and artillery were brave patriots, fighting for their country's liberation from an obvious police state tyranny. To Khrushchev and other Communist spokesmen they were "fascists," in league with capitalism and imperialism.

There is also no meeting of minds as regards the present situation in Vietnam. Most Americans, apart from a vociferous dissenting minority, believe there is both moral and political justification for help-

ing the people of South Vietnam to escape infiltration and engulfment from Communist North Vietnam. Public opinion in Communist countries, so far as it exists, views the Viet Cong much as Western public opinion regarded the Hungarians.

So, even if the UN possessed the power of an international tribunal, it would find no acceptance of agreed standards of law and justice between Communists and non-Communists. (The issue is further complicated because communism in Peking is given a diametrically different interpretation from communism in Moscow.) Moreover, one of the pre-requisites of effective law is that there is some adequate force to back up the rulings of a court. There is no semblance of such a force at the disposal of the UN, as repeated experiences show.

From Kashmir to Hungary, from Korea to Palestine, the UN proved unable to carry through its own recommended settlements. Long before the outbreak of war in Korea in 1950 the United Nations set up a commission to prepare the way for holding a free election in a united Korea. The Communist administration in control of North Korea, with Soviet backing, never admitted the commission within its borders. There was the same story with another commission which the UN appointed to look into the threat to peace created by support of the Greek Communist insurgents by the neighboring Communist states, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania. These states, with Soviet support, merely thumbed their noses at the UN commission.

The disposition of Kashmir was an excellent subject for UN adjudication. It is an area in the northern part of the Indian sub-continent where a predominantly Moslem people was under the rule of a Hindu prince. Its allegiance was disputed between India and Pakistan and India occupied most of the country. A plebiscite under UN auspices seemed to offer the fairest solu-

tion and one which Indian Prime Minister Nehru would almost certainly have favored—if he had not been personally interested in the outcome. But Nehru in this case acted like the toughest imperialist, jailing the Kashmiris who favored a plebiscite and thwarting all the efforts of a UN commission to arrange a free vote.

Palestine is another item in the record of UN failures. The international organization decreed the creation of Jewish and Arab states in the former British mandated territory, but with boundaries so irregular and indefensible that the two states could only have existed on a basis of close economic co-operation, which was not forthcoming from either side. The Palestinian Arabs and the neighboring Arab states refused to accept the UN decision and tried to wipe out Israel by force of arms. Israel was victorious in the test of arms and the armistice line, drawn when fighting ceased in 1949, was more favorable to Israel than the UN boundary had been. The United Nations was unable to halt the Arab attack, or to obtain respect for its boundary delimitation, or to change the sullen armistice into a peace.

Korea, sometimes claimed as a UN victory in resisting aggression, offers a very different picture when closely examined. The conflict there, precipitated by invasion from the Communist North, was formally a UN war, but actually a South Korean-U.S. fight. At the cost of 140,000 casualties the American people learned that the UN is a shield of papier-maché, that the theory of all the members of the UN living up to the principle of collective security and forming a posse to catch the criminal whenever aggression has been committed is a pitiful and dangerous illusion. Only a minority of UN members sent even token units to fight in Korea. Most of these units rendered excellent service, but their numbers were too small to have any serious effect on the re-

sult. And the value of these contributions was offset by the defeatist, back-seat driving of many UN members. Prime Minister Nehru of India, head of a country of over 300 million inhabitants, could not spare a single soldier for the UN expeditionary force in Korea. He did send an ambulance unit and some jute bags and was prodigal with advice, in the direction of giving the Communist aggressors all, or almost all of what they wanted.

In Vietnam the UN has taken no position at all; it would be impossible, in the divided state of the world, to get an agreed decision as to the cause of the war and the proper basis of peace. Three UN members with regional interest in the situation, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, have sent token forces. It is probably beneficial that United States military and political decisions in the difficult Vietnam situation are not hobbled and inhibited by advice and directives from the Tower of Babel on the East River.

The example of Hungary in 1956 showed that the moral influence of the United Nations is much less than some optimists hoped. It would be difficult to imagine a more flagrant violation of UN principles. But the assassination of Hungarian freedom was carried out with impunity, and the UN was not even permitted to send an observer to the obsequies.

More recently there has been the dismal fiasco of the effort of the United Nations, acting under a rather stretched interpretation of its powers, to assure peace and order in the Congo after the chaos into which that vast African area, with the notable exception of the province of Katanga, lapsed after the withdrawal of Belgian administration. Acting to some extent under the pressure of radical African leaders like the now deposed Nkrumah, of Ghana, the UN representatives made almost every conceivable mistake.

They bitterly opposed the employment of Belgian specialists and technicians, best qualified by experience to get the shattered Congo economy operating again. They diverted their military forces into a crusade against Katanga, the one part of the Congo which had realized a satisfactory biracial administration, peace, order, and economic stability under the capable leadership of one of the few Congolese native leaders of proved capacity, Moise Tshombe. When the UN forces left the Congo in 1964 the country was threatened by chaotic subversion from a savage, fanatical rebellion, with some Chinese Communist and Egyptian help and inspiration. Tshombe, temporarily in power in the central government as a result of one of the frequent volatile changes of Congolese politics, engaged a force of some hundreds of white mercenaries. And they contributed far more than the UN to the restoration of passable conditions by launching a spirited campaign against the rebels and driving them out of Stanleyville and other towns which they had occupied, incidentally saving the lives of hundreds of foreigners who were threatened with massacre.

It is important to recall these and other examples of the incapacity of the UN to deal effectively with international crises and threats to peace because many well-meaning people, in the United States and elsewhere, urge that the UN be strengthened and entrusted with authority to make important decisions. But for the United States to leave decisions vitally affecting its national interests to the UN is to abdicate responsibility and to insure that, in most cases, no decision is taken because of the absence of an effective consensus of opinion in the world organization and the absence of means to implement that consensus, even if it existed.

UN forces have performed useful minor services in such matters as policing the

feuding Greeks and Turks in Cyprus and standing sentry on the formerly troubled frontier between Israel and the United Arab Republic. But a suggestion that has been sometimes voiced, to make the defense of Formosa a UN responsibility, is in quite a different category, from the standpoint of advisability and probable results. A better prescription for risking a new Korean-type war in the Orient can hardly be imagined. The rulers of Red China have a healthy respect for United States military power. When, as is now the case, that power is clearly committed to the defense of Formosa in the event of attack, there is little danger that an attack will take place. To dilute or diffuse that responsibility by transferring it to the UN would be an invitation to aggression.

Some groups, obsessed with the probably exaggerated danger of nuclear arms tests, would place on the frail shoulders of the UN the formidable burden of supervising nuclear disarmament. That way lies, at best, futility; at worst, disaster. And there are unteachable doctrinaires who continue to parrot the slogan, "Settle international differences by enforceable world law." As if there were any common accepted propositions in law and morals between the Communist and non-Communist parts of the world or any supranational power able to enforce a legal verdict between states, even if there were any legal authority capable of handing down such verdicts!

It may, of course, be argued that the impotence of the UN in big crises is pretty generally recognized and therefore does little real harm, and that there are definite advantages in having an international association of nations to provide a forum for discussion and to sustain agencies for international cooperation in such fields as economics, health, and education.

But this, which probably summarizes

the predominant American view of the UN, overlooks some real disadvantages in the conduct of foreign affairs which UN membership imposes. It should be noted that the present make-up of the UN, especially of the Assembly, is characterized by a kind of eerie unreality. The assumption that such African bush countries as Chad, Niger, and Upper Volta are equal in voting strength to the United States, the Soviet Union and Great Britain does not reflect the actual distribution of world political and economic power and creates a hothouse atmosphere of unreality about UN votes.

As a result of the rapid liquidation of overseas colonialism, although not of the Soviet brand, since the end of World War II, there has been a vast inflation of UN membership, the number of member states having more than doubled. Most of the new members are Asian and African states and the significance of this change has not always been appraised. The nearest thing to a consensus of UN opinion is vehement opposition to Western, not Soviet colonialism. The United States under this UN pressure has found itself dragged into taking official positions which are not necessarily in its best national interest. A story published in the *New York Times* of June 28 is an excellent example.

A UN commission of 24 representatives of states, including the United States, following a trip in Africa, turned in a report supporting all rebel movements against colonial rule, urging all UN members to send arms to the rebels and also to apply military and economic sanctions against Portugal and South Africa. This would seem to commit the UN to something not easily distinguishable from the "wars of liberation" sponsored by Moscow and Peking. The average American, it is safe to say, does not regard the stimulation of racial civil wars, with their inevitable at-

tendant horrors, as one of the proper functions of the United Nations. And sensible American diplomats certainly shudder at the thought of a new Congo in South Africa, Rhodesia, Angola, or Mozambique. Yet, apparently as a result of some little noted Assembly resolution, the United States is participating in a commission which has set as one of its goals the incitement of revolutionary wars.

And at least a few Americans must be concerned with our eager association with British measures of boycott and trade and financial blockade, directed against the government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia. In this quarrel between the British Government and a British dependency that has declared its independence the United States certainly has no direct concern. The Rhodesian government is not, like the South African, committed to the absolute exclusion of the native population from the franchise. The Africans in Rhodesia now possess limited voting rights. The difference between London and Salisbury is over the rate of speed with which these rights may be expanded without risking a breakdown of administration and a lapse into political and economic chaos.

Why the United States should leap into the crusade against Rhodesia is hard to understand. Here is a friendly community, which has always welcomed Americans as businessmen or tourist visitors and never given any cause for offense in its relations with this country. Yet it is being treated much worse than some lands where Americans have been insulted and assaulted, the American flag desecrated, American official buildings damaged or burned. It is indeed ironical to reflect that, judging from precedents in Egypt, Indonesia, Ghana, and other countries a Rhodesia where mobs had been on the rampage with anti-American slogans would have been eligible for preference in foreign aid,

instead of being singled out for economic warfare.

Perhaps the greatest disservice which the UN renders to United States diplomacy is that it compels, or places strong pressure on the government to take an official stand on issues which are not a proper subject of government concern or action. Take the South African practice of *apartheid*, or racial separation, for example. The cruel and oppressive aspects of this system, the suffering it causes to individuals, have been fully publicized in novels and newspaper and magazine articles.

Considerations on the other side have attracted less attention. Among these are the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of establishing a workable one-man, one-vote system in a country where property and education are mostly in the hands of one race. There is also the unique, for Africa, industrial and economic development of South Africa and its significance as a source of employment. Natives of other African countries often make long trips to get jobs in South Africa, where housing and social benefits are better than what is available in other African states. Finally, there is and can be no assurance that the violent overthrow of *apartheid* in a bloody racial clash would create all around conditions better than those which prevail today.

In view of these and similar considerations the normal attitude of the American government in the past toward such developments as the secession of Rhodesia, or the Portuguese administration of Angola and Mozambique, or the racial separatism of South Africa could have been summed up in the phrase: Hands off. Individual American citizens or groups might express what opinions or judgments they chose; but Washington, before the period of predominant Afro-Asian influence in the UN, would have recognized no obliga-

tion either to prop up these systems against possible revolution or to work for such revolutions.

But now the United States, already involved in economic warfare against Rhodesia, is in danger of being drawn into sanctions against Portugal and South Africa, sanctions unjustified by any considerations of national interest, and capable of leading to most undesirable outbreaks of violence. There is an element of irony in the presence on some of the UN committees set up to deal with issues of colonialism and racism of representatives of notoriously tyrannical governments, like those of Hungary and Haiti. And the only immediate response to the appeal of the commission "for decolonization" to UN members to sell arms to rebel movements was an offer of cooperation from East Germany, itself a first-rate example of colonialism, Soviet style.

The question of admitting the Communist government of mainland China to the United Nations raises periodically for American representatives the danger of defeat in an arena which has not become more favorable as a result of the large influx of new African and Asian members. To be sure there is every probability that the line against the admission of Red China can be held, if the United States does not succumb to a strong propaganda campaign for cessation of opposition to the admission of the Chinese dictatorship and for the opening of negotiations looking to diplomatic relations between Washington and Peking, mounted by some academic specialists in Far Eastern affairs.

There is no valid reason for changing America's bipartisan policy, upheld by overwhelming Congressional majorities, of opposing the seating of Red China in the UN and of abstaining from the establishment of diplomatic relations. Indeed there are certain immediate reasons why it

would be most unwise to change these policies.

It is inaccurate to suggest that by continuing these policies we are playing the role of an ostrich, refusing to admit that Red China exists. Our 140,000 casualties in Korea, if nothing else, would remind us that Communist China is a reality. The issue is not whether Red China exists, but whether it is expedient or desirable to exchange embassies and welcome its government as a peace-loving member of the United Nations. The answer to both questions is "No."

Consider the effect on public opinion and the balance of power in East Asia if the United States should execute such a radical retreat from previous policies. Our friends, the fighting anti-Communists in South Vietnam, Thailand and South Korea, in Formosa and the Philippines, the more realistic groups in Japan, would be profoundly discouraged; some might consider whether the time had not come to jump on Mao Tse-tung's band-wagon. Moreover, such a change of stance would seem singularly ill timed. During the last year Red China's adventurous and truculent foreign policy has brought a series of severe diplomatic setbacks. The Chinese have been quarantined in Moscow, insulted in Havana, unceremoniously booted out of Indonesia, Ghana, and some other African countries. Their avowed policy of helping all extreme revolutionary movements has proved a poor means of winning friends and influencing people, even among the leaders of fairly left-wing governments. For the United States, just at this nadir of Red China's diplomatic fortunes, to rush to its aid by altering sound and long-established policies of nonrecognition and opposition to China's admission to the UN would be an act of monumental stupidity.

The situation might seem different if

there had been any change in the Red Chinese policies and attitudes that have motivated the American position. The Red Chinese official newspapers (there are no others) are one long tirade of hate and vituperation, mostly directed against the United States, with some additional broadsides against the "revisionist" Soviet Union, which is constantly represented, rather quaintly, as an ally and accomplice of the State Department and the CIA.

It would be superfluous and tiresome to document this statement in detail and great length. Let the following excerpt from the newspaper *Jiefangjun Bao* (*Liberation Army Daily*) of May 30, 1966, suffice:

The crimes United States imperialism has committed against the Chinese people are so numerous that they cannot be counted. We hereby sternly warn the United States aggressors: the great Chinese people, armed with Mao Tse-tung's thought, are not to be trifled with. The debt in blood must be repaid with blood. United States imperialism cannot escape the Chinese people's severe punishment. . . .

We must hold the enemy in the deepest hatred. We must not for a moment forget the monstrous crimes committed by United States imperialism against the Chinese people. We must not for a moment forget that at this very instant U. S. imperialism is engaging in mass slaughter, largescale burning and the spreading of poisonous chemicals and gases in South Vietnam. We must not for a moment forget that it is committing aggression, subversion and sabotage everywhere in the world. We must forever keep this deepest hatred uppermost in our minds. Each time U.S. imperialism intrudes into our country, each time it kills one of our class brothers we must enter it in the account and much teach the people to hate U. S. imperialism so as to deepen our class

hatred for it. We must put our hatred on the points of our bayonets, load it into the breeches of our guns and be ready at all times to strike back hard at U. S. imperialism, the common enemy of the people of the world.

This is not the language of a regime that is thinking in terms of conciliation and peaceful co-existence. Indeed the issues of establishment of diplomatic relations, cultural exchanges and the seating of Red China in the UN would be viewed more realistically if it were more generally realized that none can be settled by the unilateral action of the United States. If one is to take seriously the repeated statements of its leaders, some of very recent origin, Red China would accept neither a seat in the UN nor diplomatic relations with the United States, except on terms impossibly humiliating for both.

At the time last spring when some academic Far Eastern specialists, with the editorial approval and support of the *New York Times*, were urging a change of the United States position on admission to the UN and establishment of diplomatic relations the *Times* published an official statement of the Red Chinese government view that completely cuts the ground from under the feet of our amateur academic diplomats:

So long as the United States Government refuses to pull out its armed forces from Taiwan and Taiwan Strait normalization of Chinese-American relations is entirely out of the question and so is the solution of such a concrete question as the exchange of visits between personnel of the two countries.

This would seem plain enough to convince an illiterate, as well as persons of the scholarly equipment required for Far Eastern studies. Red China will only accept diplomatic relations with the United

States if America runs away from the obligations of a defensive alliance with the Chinese Nationalist Government on Formosa. What effect this would have on America's standing and credit as a nation loyal to its commitments scarcely requires emphasizing.

Equally harsh conditions are put up for Red China's acceptance of a seat in the United Nations. As formulated by Foreign Minister Chen Yi, these include expulsion from the UN of Formosa and of other members vaguely designated as "satellites of imperialism" and also cancellation of the UN resolution finding Red China guilty of aggression in Korea.

In view of this situation, in view of the Great Wall of isolation which the rulers of Red China have built around themselves, there would seem to be no honorable or even possible course for the United States except to stand firm for its previous poli-

cies and wait until there are some signs of sobriety and realism in Peking. Still another reason for abstaining from hasty action is that Red China in the spring and early summer of 1966 was clearly in the throes of an unusually serious purge and struggle for power, possibly as a result of the deterioration in health of Mao Tse-tung.

In the matter of Red Chinese admission to the UN, as on such issues as disarmament, and a trigger-happy attitude toward the application of sanctions against colonial powers (always excepting the Soviet Union) United States representatives in the East River headquarters should operate as cautiously as troops advancing over terrain strewn with mines and booby-traps. Perhaps the best maxim for the United States Ambassador to the UN, with its Afro-Asian predominance, would be Talleyrand's well-known saying:

"Pas trop de zèle."