

# *American Security: A Timely Assessment*

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AS THE UNITED STATES marks its bicentennial, it is of crucial importance that Americans understand their country's strength as well as the threats developing in the world arena. Only as they comprehend the new dangers, as well as America's advantages, will they be able to discern the foreign and military policies necessary to sustain the republic in a hostile world environment. While Soviet armed might will remain the principal threat to the United States, new threats are emerging—threats which the U.S. public only dimly perceives.

A clear understanding of America's strategic requirements must be based on an accurate description of international realities. Not only is the U. S. faced with the need to strengthen its nuclear deterrent and to renew its capacity for dealing with communist subversive warfare, but it will have to be prepared to counter additional adversaries that intend to harass America in various ways.

The change in the global balance of power came to the attention of Americans, in dramatic form, when the oil-producing nations of the Middle East employed an embargo—a weapon of economic warfare. In the short time since then, the United States and other industrialized Western nations,

including Japan, have come to appreciate the new importance of the oil states. Two of those states, Saudi Arabia and Iran, have graduated from the ranks of Third World nations and set forth on the road to industrialization in the Western pattern. At the same time, the weakness of some of the older states of Europe has been cruelly exposed.

Even as the Persian Gulf oil states were asserting themselves and gaining a new status, the United States was turning away from the role of global policeman which it adopted in the years after World War II. The United States went through the traumatic experience of withdrawal from Southeast Asia. The exact lines of its strategic frontier in the Western Pacific are yet to be determined.

The American withdrawal from Indo-China unquestionably marked a yielding to communist ambitions in Asia and a turning point in U. S. relations with Asian Third World countries. In the Indo-China war, as in the Korean war almost a generation earlier, the United States failed to achieve victory because of restrictions on the use of military power at its command. The "fight to lose" theorists prevailed. This reluctance to employ American military

technology in defense of American interests—in a struggle with revolutionary forces employing the population weapon—must be overcome if the United States ever again becomes involved in an armed struggle with a Third World adversary.

But, in some ways, too much has been made of the American withdrawal from Southeast Asia. Some writers have presented the retreat from Indo-China almost as the end of the Western world. Yet the U. S. departure from Southeast Asia did not constitute an American Dien Bien Phu. U.S. power remained intact. To be sure, the withdrawal—propagandistically described as “peace with honor” and forced by congressional restrictions on military operations—represented for the United States a partial failure of nerve and understanding, a triumph of radical media politics over national interests, and a demonstration of the unwillingness of the American people to support a truly protracted struggle under guerrilla-subversive war conditions favorable to a revolutionary proletarian regime.

Nevertheless, withdrawal from Indo-China and adjustment of the strategic frontier in the Pacific does not signify a collapse of American power. The United States is not defeated or exhausted. It has the capacity to establish new defense lines and to protect its changing interests in a variety of new ways. In brief, the United States is in process of reappraising its national security needs and foreign policy priorities.

For the time being, the American people display a cautious mood insofar as foreign policy is concerned. They clearly view with disfavor any suggestion of new military ventures in remote regions, except in very special circumstances where national pride and interest are combined, as in the Mayaguez incident. A great many Americans question the strategic assumptions and objectives accepted as gospel in the 1950's and 1960's. It would be a mistake, however, to describe the current mood as an enduring one. The shape of the American future is uncertain, including the shape of public opinion.

Charles Gati, writing in *Foreign Policy* (Summer, 1975), shrewdly noted:

The American public has in the past rather consistently fluctuated between periods of underinvolvement and overinvolvement, and it is hard to say what combination of international, domestic-political, and economic events may prompt a sudden reversal of opinion, or indeed how long the prevailing mood of sulky aloofness may last.

Thoughtful citizens, who prefer to understand and help shape national policy rather than drift with the tide of events, are attempting to define the new parameters of U.S. foreign and military policy for the decade ahead. They pose these questions: What should move Americans and their government? What are the nation's truly vital security interests? What areas and situations justify the deployment of armed forces? Obviously, the old answers will not do. The nature of the threat to the nation has changed.

In searching for answers, one can begin by recognizing that economic concerns play a large part in the current thinking of the American people. Irrespective of political orientation along conservative or liberal lines, Americans display increasing reluctance to favor armed intervention in a situation on the grounds of defense of freedom, old alliance commitments, or appeals to “national liberation.” This attitude cuts both ways, affecting the favored objectives—in years past—of both conservatives and liberals. On the other hand, it seems equally clear that bold governmental action to protect America's economic interests constitutes one of the few forms of action not depreciated by the U.S. public.

The central fact of this period is the concern Americans feel with regard to their economic security, including the nation's access to essential imported oil and critical minerals. Americans also are concerned about international grain transactions which, they believe, may adversely affect their standard of living or enhance their

adversaries' freedom of action. Certainly, one finds keen awareness in the United States that food, like oil, is a weapon.

Foreign policy is not conducted in a vacuum. It must be understood against the backdrop of domestic concerns, fears and ambitions. And, at this time, the American people are mindful of the perils facing their economy and the economies of friendly nations in the West. This awareness engenders, among other things, concern for the unhindered movement of oil at sea and the protection of offshore drilling and mining. It also dictates limits on offensive action overseas which would impose severe stresses on the national treasury.

These attitudes should not be dismissed as evidence of a new isolationism in the United States. If anything, Americans are increasingly aware that what happens in a remote part of the world has an impact on the United States. But Americans today are less inclined to be emotionally or ideologically committed to faraway lands and causes. The enthusiasms of the forties, fifties and sixties have cooled considerably. Americans have paid enough for crusades, in blood and money, and are now much more selective in their appeals for governmental action abroad. We have a chastened, perhaps even a wiser, nation in this respect. And, in the main, we have a people in which there is a consensus developing that our foreign policy must be based on a cold-eyed realism with respect to national interests.

This is not to say that we don't have advocates of a renewed international adventurism who urge—indeed insist—that the United States, in company with other advanced countries, must redistribute a large part of its wealth to nations in the Third World. Harlan Cleveland, former diplomat and current director of the Aspen Institute's Program in International Affairs, is typical of the element that is calling for a "global fairness revolution" (Mr. Cleveland's phrase). In a recent speech, Mr. Cleveland insisted that the U.S. share its wealth in the name of "redistributive jus-

tice" or "soon, we will see the tides of expectation and resentment rise up around us."

This kind of scare talk, which also suggests that the U.S. owes a moral debt to violent, unstable Third World countries, indicates where the foes of a realistic foreign policy will stand in the period ahead. It also serves to remind Americans that a serious challenge is being posed by reckless regimes in the southern continents. The demagoguery displayed in the United Nations organization, with the burning antagonism of retarded, proletarian states towards the U.S., the European Community and Japan, indicates the realities of violent feeling and actual violence with which the West will have to deal in the remaining years of this century. And the violent elements in the Third World cannot be appeased by yielding to the incendiary rhetoric at the U. N. or by offering to transfer wealth which would be squandered by the one-party regimes and dictatorships in power in so many of the backward lands of the southern hemisphere.

Geoffrey Barraclough, writing in *The New York Review of Books* (Aug. 7, 1975) asserted that we are witnessing a "fundamental confrontation between the poor nations and the rich." He charged that "what the Western nations, particularly the United States, fear is the loss of the power and leverage they wielded in the past, and of the affluence they helped to create and sustain."

No Americans need feel ashamed of a determination to maintain U.S. power and leverage. The good life Americans enjoy is the fruit of generations of hard work. Other, less talented and less energetic people, want to take it away in the name of "redistributive justice," international class warfare or whatever. The need, simply, is for Americans to be realistic about this struggle and to press for every advantage.

In strengthening their sense of realism, Americans would do well to jettison post-World War II assumptions about the Third World. As Peregrine Worsthorne

has written in the *Sunday Telegraph*, the assumed moral advantage of the backward countries has "exercised an astonishing influence in world affairs." In point of fact, the new states of the Third World are setting records for exploitive and brutal action. Writing of the population war in Bengal in the early seventies, Mr. Worsthorne said:

If the British raj still ruled in India, the dreadful human tragedy that now darkens the sub-continent would not be taking place. Like it or not, the end of empire has meant more death and destruction than was ever caused by its existence.

The record of the Third World must be borne in mind when one reads of the alleged exploitation by the West in general and the United States in particular. Many of the Third World countries which are most insistent on fundamental change in the economic world order (which want to share in a redistribution of Western wealth) are limited today in their military options against the Western world—limited to terrorism, harassment and subversive warfare. Cuba and the Palestine Liberation Organization are examples of countries or political groupings, which pretend they are states, which possess this limited but very hurtful range of options. On the other hand, India, despite its grinding poverty, which seems beyond solution, has exploded a nuclear device.

Robert Heilbroner, a liberal economist, has warned that major underdeveloped nations may use small nuclear capabilities "as an instrument of blackmail to force the developed world to transfer large amounts of wealth to the poverty stricken world." And Prof. David Van Praagh of Carleton University in Canada has given a more explicit warning in connection with India. Writing in *Asian Affairs*, Prof. Van Praagh asked:

By the end of the decade will India be pointing its ICBMs in the general direction of the wheat fields of Kansas and

Saskatchewan, and say, Give or else? The prospect is not fantastic.

Such predictions make sense when one bears in mind that much of the world is entering a time of famine or near famine. Smith Hempstone, the author and columnist, has said:

Historians of the future will remember 1975 as the first year of the Big Hunger. Initially it will cost the lives of perhaps 20 million people (according to Nobel laureate Norman E. Borlaug) and trigger cataclysmic social and political unrest. Not only is there famine in Africa and India, for example, but the Soviet Union, for all its military might, is unable to produce sufficient food for its people. Repeatedly, the USSR has had to call on the United States to obtain massive quantities of grain.

Food, in short, is a powerful weapon in the American arsenal. Before many years, food may become America's most important weapon. Indeed Assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders has observed that "food will give us influence because decisions in other nations will depend on what we do."

It is essential that Americans regard food as a strategic weapon, as part of their security equipment, or, as Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz has described it, as "a tool in the kit of American diplomacy." It is essential because the U.S. is resource-deficient in other areas, and must take advantage of every bargaining chip.

The United States imports some one hundred minerals, at least half of which have important uses. Sixteen of these are imported in large quantities. For example, we import such critical materials as chrome, manganese, tin, cobalt, and diamonds. Vice Admiral John M. Lee, USN (Ret.) has pointed out that "the key resource areas of central importance to us for mineral imports are reasonably concentrated: in the Western hemisphere, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica, the north coast of South

America; Southern Africa; Australia." The danger is that Marxist forces will become established in many of these areas. It is imperative that the United States exert itself to prevent the spread of revolution—in Southern Africa and South America, for example.

Given this situation—a growing need for resources located in the southern hemisphere (resources which, in many cases, only Western know-how can unlock) and an environment of increasing hostility—the United States has a requirement for a new strategy. This is what is best described as a Resource Control Strategy. Admiral Will discussed such a strategy in an address to the Naval War College in 1974, saying:

The premise of the concept called resource control is that shortages of resource supply will replace shortages of demand as the dominant force in world economics. If that premise is true, access to, availability of, and the ability to move essential resources will become the central objective of the strategic equation. This viewpoint implies that as the resource problem develops, the primary military task after physical defense of the homeland will be to support access to needed resources against constraints, interruptions or denials, whether imposed by military force, by governmental actions, or by economic effects. It could include denial of resources to hostile states.

This analysis strikes this writer as a correct analysis of America's situation. Defense of the homeland remains the primary strategic military task, and for that purpose the United States has need of superiority in nuclear armaments and new laser weapons. American strength in these areas is the only deterrent to attack or blackmail by other major nuclear powers.

But the second phase of America's defense now involves resource control rather than alliance support. In an era of energy shortages and threatening mineral shortages, older allies such as Italy and Greece

aren't as significant as assured access to resources available from Iran and South Africa, for instance.

Indeed it is essential that Americans consider new perspectives in the light of current and future national needs. The Mediterranean world, long a focus of American defensive strategy, is not a resource access area. At the time the NATO alliance came into being, the Mediterranean Sea was a truly vital waterway for the West. Suez and Gibraltar were key elements in the global strategic equation. Today, though Suez has been reopened, the tanker traffic from the Persian Gulf moves around the southern tip of Africa. In the fifties, France controlled much of North Africa and the United States had a major air base in Libya. The Western nations have departed from the southern littoral of the Mediterranean and the overall significance of this enclosed sea has been vastly diminished. Yet U.S. foreign and military policies take scant note of the changed situation.

Ideally, none of the withdrawals and retreats would have taken place. Had Western vision been clearer and its morale stronger, had there not been so much self-doubt and self-hatred in the West, there wouldn't have been any yielding of whole territories and populations—from the Baltic states and Algeria a generation ago down to Vietnam and Mozambique in the past year. Tragically, however, the liberal component in Western societies convinced governments and thought leaders in the West that the moral advantage lay with socialist regimes and with revolutionary forces in Afro-Asia and Latin America. This thought orientation of the West produced a series of terrible reverses and disasters and caused millions of people to be abandoned to communist rule or terrorist regimes. Nevertheless, it is excessive to say, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote in *Le Monde*, that "the Third World War has taken place and ended in defeat." This is not true—for Americans. It is true that the failure of will and understanding, which was evident in many Western countries and not exclusively in the United

States, has resulted in appalling tragedy for many peoples. But the fact remains that America is still sheltered by the oceans, possessed of a high degree of security afforded by its armed might, involved on a global basis as a result of its wealth, and, therefore, possessed of options and the means of implementing a new strategy for the safeguarding of the American people in the decades ahead.

The great question is whether Americans will acknowledge the new international realities, reject the counsel of those who would dilute our strength, and move to establish a new strategy for survival.

Clearly, there will be tremendous resistance to doing these things. The supranationalists who caused the United States to make so many mistakes in the post-World War II world, including the creation of a vast array of incapable, synthetic states, are still with us. Having urged appeasement of the Soviet Union and Communist China over a period of many years, they now propose that the United States capitulate economically to the synthetic nations created through their influence. Thus, for example, Dr. Robert R. Bowie of the Harvard Center for International Affairs writes in *The Christian Science Monitor* that there is a strong case for seeking to meet the lesser developed countries' demands by cooperative solutions." He admits, however, that the effect in the advanced countries will be to displace workers and industries.

The yielding to Third World demands has been acquiesced in most explicitly by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger who told the undeveloped nations, in an address at the University of Wisconsin July 14, 1975, "We are prepared to undertake joint efforts to alleviate your economic problems." He declared that "if the industrial world wants to overcome the attitude of confrontation between nations it must offer equitable solutions for the problems of the less fortunate parts of the world." And Dr. Kissinger's views were echoed by Sen. Edward Kennedy who said, in a speech quoted in *U. N. Chronicle*, that Americans must

make "a basic commitment of our food abundance to the developing world."

Many Americans will say, however, "This is where I came in." These share-America's wealth notions, advanced as new ideas in the mid-seventies, are the same notions that led to the foreign aid program beginning in the 1940's. The underlying concept is as mistaken now as it was then—indeed more so because of the establishment of a revolutionary order through much of Afro-Asia and Latin America.

Yet Dr. Kissinger persists in saying that "allies and adversaries, new nations and old, rich and poor, are part of a world community." He asserts that "our interdependence on this planet is becoming the central fact of our diplomacy."

All the evidence, however, is to the contrary. There is less community now than in the forties or fifties. The gap between the advanced nations of the West and the proletarian nations of Afro-Asia, for example, is greater than ever before because of the virtual disappearance of the Western-oriented native elites which were in power immediately after the end of Western colonial rule. In black Africa, for example, the head of the organization of African states—and thus the spokesman of the black nations—is General Amin, who drove Asian Ugandans into exile, committed unspeakable atrocities and hailed Adolf Hitler.

Throughout the underdeveloped world terrorist groups flourish and dominate the political process. In Southeast Asia communist regimes have extended their sway over a wide region. With few exceptions, the countries of the Third World are impossible partners for free world nations, elements that cannot be assimilated in a law-abiding, reason-respecting international community. The turbulent U. N. organization is an accurate mirror of the disorder in much of the world. Its actions indicate the impossibility of community.

Beyond the Third World, there is the unyielding mass of communism. Walt Rostow's prediction that the communist world would mellow has been proven hopelessly

mistaken, as Solzhenitsyn has explained so eloquently and convincingly. Indeed Soviet Russia and Communist China clearly reject, by their deeds at home and abroad, the idea of "interdependence" which Dr. Kissinger tries to sell to Americans.

The beginning of wisdom in the conduct of American foreign and military policy is a clear recognition that, for as far as one can see, there is no hope of a worldwide community, no gain to be achieved for the United States by a further sharing of resources, no hope of establishing in our time a global community of free, independent and cooperative nations.

The United States has need of a truly realistic vision which takes note of the very narrow circle of genuinely free nations or nations which have a strong interest in associating themselves with America. The United States must pinpoint those countries essential to America's military security and economic well-being, and concentrate diplomatic efforts on strengthening ties within that limited circle. In the main, these will be countries that, like the United States, are targets of communist aggression or subversive warfare, and that have natural resources or industrial capabilities that make them important and ensure a viable future. For example, among the most important—the key—countries for the United States are Canada, Brazil, Iran, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Japan, and West Germany. These are the powerhouses of the future. These are the nations with oil, gold, uranium, strategic location, industrial know-how and the capacity for effective military action in concert with the United States. This list is by no means comprehensive, but a realistic American strategy must feature these countries.

In calculating the strategic global balance, the United States can afford to "lose" countries such as Columbia, Ceylon, Tanzania, and even such old allies as Turkey and the Philippines. But it cannot afford to be without access to the new strength offered by such countries as Iran and South Africa. The oil of the former and the mineral

wealth and strategic location of the latter make those nations major factors in our time. Thus America should concentrate on forging new links to those strategically important countries. It should not waste time on appeasing Third World nations or, worst of all, transfer wealth to unstable, revolutionary countries.

The United States must establish a new concert of nations, fashioned among the strong, because the enmity of the communist superpowers will not wither away. For as far into the future as anyone can discern, Soviet Russia and Communist China will pose an enormous threat to America and to the civilization of which it is a part. The United States needs to add to its strength by judicious links with other capable nations instead of engaging in an orgy of guilt feelings about incapable and frequently hostile states.

If the United States rejects the Kissinger vision of supranationalism, appeasement and wealth transfers, then changes in the nation's military policy will follow the change in foreign policy. Chiefly, the United States will rely more than ever on sea-based power.

Adoption of a realistic foreign policy would involve, of course, strengthening of strategic retaliatory forces, including swift construction of a fleet of the most advanced missile-firing submarines. But it also most probably would entail consideration of a countrywide anti-ballistic missile defense against limited attacks by smaller nuclear powers.

A strategy keyed to such widely separated countries as West Germany, Iran, South Africa and Brazil would necessarily require flexible forces that could be easily deployed by air and sea. This, in turn, undoubtedly would mean a reduction in fixed troop or ship commitments in a given area.

In naval terms, need would exist for a surface fleet able to undertake missions on a global basis, in cooperation with the navies of friendly powers. An adequate naval posture also would require at least

fifteen aircraft carriers, with a mix of large Nimitz-size carriers and a new class of medium carrier in the 45,000-ton range. In addition, it would require surface vessels fully equipped with long-range, surface-to-surface missiles, plus advanced, long-range naval guns to deal with small missile ships and to support shore operations.

Over the past decade, the United States has been denied access to many airbases. Adoption of a realistic foreign policy certainly would lead to prompt negotiations for landing and refueling rights for U. S. military aircraft in the territories of the principal states participating in the new defense bloc.

Strengthening of naval forces is imperative in any national resource control strategy. As Admiral Will has noted, "A number of allies, especially Japan and to a serious degree the United Kingdom, would be more rapidly and critically affected by blockade than the United States, and their lines of communications to resource sources are more exposed." For example, Japan's lifeline is the chain of tankers transporting oil across the Indian Ocean to the home is-

lands. That lifeline is endangered, for, as Fox Butterfield noted in *The New York Times* (Aug. 10, 1975) Communist China "has quietly built up what is now regarded as the world's third largest navy."

The bicentennial offers Americans an opportunity to appraise their nation's power position and the policies which supposedly safeguard it. Indeed reappraisal is a grim necessity, as America's power position deteriorates. The United States has great strength, despite extraordinary setbacks and appalling mistakes in policy-making which have thrown away American advantages. The special danger in this year is that the United States will continue to make concessions to the Soviet Union in arms agreements and, at the same time, will begin to divest itself anew of wealth and power in its dealing with arrogant Third World nations. It is vital that the American people become aware of this danger, turn away from a defeatist foreign policy, and understand the imperatives of realism in fashioning strong ties with a select group of reliable states with the means and the will to survive.