

The New Cult of Neutralism

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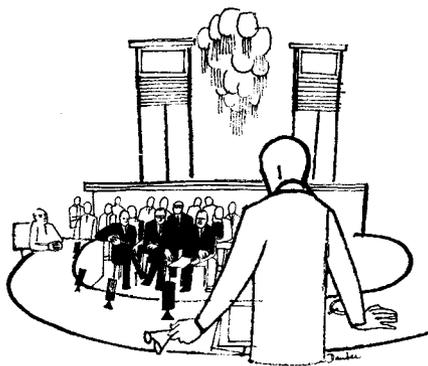
THE PROBLEMS new nations face in political and economic development are difficult enough in their own right. But they are further complicated by the fact that the new nations find themselves drawn into international affairs to an unprecedented degree. While building governments and seeking to realize the most elementary aspirations of their people, they are constantly being wooed, asked to make judgments or to assume responsibilities for which they are, in most cases, thoroughly unprepared.

Our own approach to the new nations has not helped matters. As in most other fields of policy, the United States has been going from one extreme to the other. For a time we acted as if the only political significance of the new nations was as potential military allies; neutrality was condemned and great efforts were made to induce new nations to join security pacts. Within a few years this policy has been replaced by its exact opposite. We now not only seem to find neutrality commendable; we have gone further and have conducted ourselves in a manner that may make our allies, at least those outside the North Atlantic area, doubt the wisdom of close association with the United States. The oversimplification that could see no political role for the new nations except as members of security pacts has been replaced by another oversimplification based on the premise that the "real" contest is for the allegiance of the uncommitted. We sometimes act as if we were engaged in a debate with the Communists in a sort of Oxford Union where the uncommitted or neutral nations act as moderators and award a prize after hearing all arguments.

WE MUST ASK ourselves, however, whether the new exaltation of noncommitment is not just as dangerous as the previous emphasis on alliance-building, and whether there is not an inconsistency between the desire of the new nations to be neutrals and their desire to be arbiters.

To begin with, there is a certain ambivalence, if not disingenuousness, in the sudden deference now being paid to neutrality. The principal difference between the Dulles approach to the new nations and that which urges America "to respect neutrality" often seems to be merely one of method. Both policies are designed to bring the new nations somehow to our side. Secretary Dulles thought the way to do this was to castigate their neutralism. Many of those who see in the new countries the arbiters of international relations imply that the way to win their friendship is to respect their desire for noninvolvement. Both assumptions are based on an illusion.

For it is extremely doubtful whether, on many of the most important issues dividing the world, *any* policy can win the support of the uncommitted. A number of Americans seem to assume that the reluctance of the new nations to commit themselves is due in large part to our failure to "present our



case properly" or to the fact that the new nations have certain positive views that we have failed to take into account. But this line of reasoning itself fails to take into account the fact that on most international issues, except those affecting them most directly, the new nations will invariably take a position somewhere between the contenders, regardless of their view of the intrinsic merit of a given dispute. To the new nations, neutrality seems more important than the issues involved

in any particular dispute because both their image of themselves and their bargaining position depend on maintaining that neutrality. "Neither side has won us," said an African diplomat during the 1960 session of the General Assembly, "and we are determined that neither will."

THE UNITED STATES, of all countries, should be able to understand this state of mind. In the first years of our existence no conceivable British policy could have led to an American alliance or even to American support on policies outside the Western Hemisphere. Our desire not to become involved was stronger than any views we may have had on international issues, except those affecting the Western Hemisphere most urgently. Nothing Britain could have said or done would have induced us formally to take sides. If Great Britain in 1914 or 1939 had made its resistance to aggression dependent on American support, Germany would have overrun Europe both times without opposition. No British policy, however respectful of our neutrality, could have induced us to give up our noncommitment.

It is no different with the new nations. A grave problem arises when the laudable view that we should understand and *accept* their desire to maintain neutrality is transformed into an *exaltation* of noncommitment. Although it would probably have been wise to have avoided such groupings as SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization), it is surely going too far to seem to pay greater attention to neutrals than to allies. The realization that we should not press the new nations to join alliances should not be carried to the extreme of discouraging those who have made a different choice. When noncommitment becomes a cult, slogans such as "appealing to world opinion" can easily turn into excuses for inaction or irresponsibility.

The new nations will take a stand against dangers that they fear will affect them. But they are not apt to take a stand on problems that seem to them far away. The Chinese brutality in Tibet made an impression in India; the equally brutal Soviet repression in Hungary did not. Despite all moralistic protestations to the contrary, the reason for the dif-

ference in attitude was practical and not theoretical. Chinese pressure on India's borders was a concrete danger and the events in Hungary simply were not. Though it is true that our policy with respect to the new nations has often been maladroit, it does not follow that a different policy can change their nonalignment.

The New Judges

To be sure, the new nations sometimes create the opposite impression because their own attitude toward noncommitment is at least as ambivalent as ours. All too often, they couple insistence on respect for their neutrality with an attempt to play the arbiter's role in international affairs. But the arbiter's role implies that they will support one of the parties if they can be convinced of the correctness of its position. It is an invitation to a courtship that encourages the very pressure which is said to be resented.

Many of the leaders of the new states are flattered by the rewards that fall to the uncommitted in the competition of the major powers. For many of them, playing a role on the international scene seems not only more dramatic but also much simpler than the complex jobs they face at home. Almost all of their domestic problems require patient, detailed efforts, and the results are frequently long delayed. Domestically, each action has a price. But on the international scene, it is possible to be the center of attention simply by striking a pose. Ambitious men can thus play the dramatic role that is often denied to them at home, or they can use foreign policy as a means to solidify their claim to national leadership.

Unfortunately, the same factors that make the international arena so tempting—being wooed, escaping from intractable domestic problems—also militate against the seriousness of the effort. It is the symbolic quality of international forums that is most attractive to many of the leaders of the new nations, as we have seen in the opening weeks of the present session of the U.N. General Assembly. The opportunity was welcomed to declaim general maxims that never seem to apply quite so simply at home or to the issues of foreign policy in which an uncom-

mitted nation is directly concerned. But these same nations are much less willing to assume substantive responsibilities, particularly in areas not directly related to their immediate interests.



If the new nations are encouraged to arbitrate all disputes, the impact on international relations will be demoralizing. Noncommitment will thereby defeat its own object. It will be merely another reason for occupying a place at the center of all disputes.

The utility of common action for carrying out tasks in which a real world opinion exists is not at issue. But we must recognize that on many of the most difficult international problems there is no such thing as a meaningful world opinion. And it is simply asking too much of the new nations, which have barely achieved independence, to help settle such technically complex disputes as that over disarmament.

The argument has often been heard that one of the obstacles to a wise United States policy on arms control is the absence of adequate technical studies. Yet our sophistication in this field is incomparably greater than that of any new nations, most of which do not have even one person studying the problem full time. They have no modern weapons arsenal of their own to give them an understanding of strategic problems. They have no technical staffs to study the subject. What they do have is a volatile public opinion at home. In these circumstances, the new nations can easily fall prey to Soviet slogans which sound attractive but which in fact are disguised efforts to disarm the West. The uncommitted are in no position to form a responsible judgment, much less to develop a serious program.

THE RESULT of gearing all policy to the presumed wishes of the uncommitted is that many issues are falsified and many problems are evaded. Abstract declarations substitute for concrete negotiations, and diplomacy is reduced to the coining of slogans. Pressure for confrontations of heads of major states is exerted, but is not accompanied by any detailed programs. Peace is demanded in the abstract, but much less attention is given to defining the conditions that make peace meaningful.

Far from aiding the diplomatic progress that is demanded so insistently, such a process tends to thwart it. Far from "strengthening the United Nations," it may ultimately undermine it. Soviet negotiators will lose any incentive for making responsible proposals, since they will be constantly tempted by opportunities for cheap propaganda victories. The West will grow increasingly frustrated when it finds itself incapable of enlisting the support of the new nations no matter how moderate or reasonable its program. And the new nations will be induced to take positions on issues in which the very act of noncommitment proclaims their unconcern and with respect to which their judgment is often highly erratic. It is far from clear why nations that are in need of assistance in almost all aspects of their national life, many of which have difficulty maintaining order within their own borders, should be capable of dealing with the whole gamut of international problems.

Khrushchev's Shoe

Indeed, when neutrality becomes an end in itself, it can unwittingly lead the uncommitted to add their pressure to that of the Communist bloc. The tendency to seek a position separate from the two big blocs can be used by skillful Communist diplomacy to drive the West back step by step.

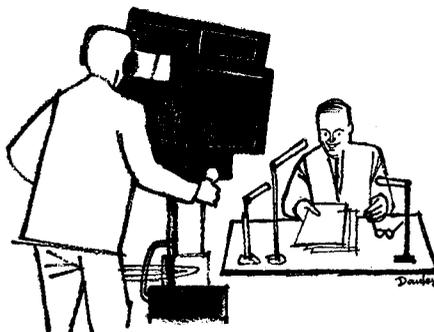
When countries as varied as India, Yugoslavia, Indonesia, Ghana, and the United Arab Republic form a "bloc," they are united above all by two motives: to stay aloof from the disputes of the major powers and to magnify their own influence. This desire is understandable. But we must not assume that they will be

swayed from this course by the logic of our argument. Apart from domestic and Communist pressures, the internal politics of the neutral "bloc" will prevent it. Individual neutralist nations will not easily separate themselves from their partners even if they should disagree with them on specific measures. India, whatever the private convictions of its leaders, will not easily oppose the United Arab Republic lest it face a united Moslem opposition in its quarrels with Pakistan and also for fear of its own Moslem minority of forty millions. The United Arab Republic will be reluctant to disavow extremist African states lest it forfeit its claim to leadership in Africa. The tone of the whole neutral "bloc" can thus easily be set by the most irresponsible of its members. While we should have patience with these attitudes, we must understand also that on any given issue most of the new nations will seek a position between the two contenders regardless of the merits of the disputes.

AS A RESULT, a premium will be placed on Soviet intransigence. When Mr. Khrushchev spoke to the General Assembly in September, 1960, a considerable portion of the American press claimed that he "had overplayed his hand," that he had "alienated the uncommitted." His intemperance was contrasted with the sobriety and statesmanship of President Eisenhower. There is no doubt that Mr. Khrushchev was intemperate. It is less clear, however, whether in the long run his actions will not prove of considerable advantage to the Soviet Union. The very violence of the attack on Mr. Hammarskjöld served as a warning to the new nations of the fate awaiting them should they displease the Communist countries too much. In any given crisis, therefore, the urgings of the new nations may be directed against us not because they disagree with our position but because opposition to us carries few risks. Conversely, the virulence of Communist reaction to any criticism causes the uncommitted to behave with great circumspection in opposing Communist policies.

The speeches in the General Assembly of 1960 by such leaders as Nasser, Sukarno, Nkrumah, and

even Nehru illustrate this point. The attacks on the West were pointed and direct, those on the Communist bloc circumspect and highly ambiguous. Almost every speech by these leaders attacked western imperialism. Not a single reference was made to the unprovoked Soviet threat against Berlin—not to speak of other



Soviet policies in Eastern Europe. Nor did the uncommitted nations that were supposed to have been alienated by Mr. Khrushchev rush to the defense of the Secretary-General.

Further, if one considers Soviet relations with the neutrals from the point of view of bargaining technique, Communist belligerence may not have been nearly so foolish as was often alleged. Since the new nations are not likely to support the position of either side completely, regardless of what arguments are presented, it may in fact be good negotiating tactics to start from extreme proposals. Then even if the new nations support Communist demands only partially, the Soviets can in effect add the pressure of the uncommitted nations to that of their own bloc in order to realize at least part of their program. The requirements of maintaining formal neutrality force many leaders who have opposed the Soviet Union on one issue to support it on another. Thus at the 1960 session of the General Assembly, Mr. Nehru failed to support Mr. Khrushchev's proposal for a change in the U.N. Charter with respect to the Secretary-General. In return, he proposed organizational changes whose practical consequence came very close to meeting Mr. Khrushchev's aims. Soviet brutality, coupled with the desire of the uncommitted to remain neutral above all else, can establish the familiar Soviet diplomatic "rules" in the

United Nations, according to which the only acceptable changes in the *status quo* are those which magnify Communist power or influence.

Conversely, by seeking to meet all the presumed wishes of the new nations, we may force them to move away from us to demonstrate their independence. It would be ironic indeed if in seeking to approach them too closely we drove them in the direction of the Communist position.

Slogans and the Congo

World opinion is not something abstract that our diplomats must seek to discover and to which we then must adjust. We have a duty not only to discover but to shape it. World opinion does not exist in a vacuum. It is compounded of many factors, including the imagination and decisiveness of our own policy. Many a leader from the uncommitted areas would prefer a clear and firm United States position to the almost desperate attempt to make him share responsibility for our actions.

When we are convinced of the correctness of our course, we should pursue it, even if it does not gain the immediate approval of the uncommitted—particularly in fields such as disarmament and European policy, which are remote from both the understanding and the concern of the new nations. If the uncommitted are to act as intermediaries, there must be clear positions to mediate. Otherwise a responsibility is thrown on the neutrals or on the United Nations that they will not be able to bear.

The crises in the Congo illustrates this point very clearly. Our objective of "keeping the cold war out of Africa" was desirable. But the measures adopted to achieve it were highly questionable. "Keeping the cold war out of Africa" is a meaningless abstraction unless at least a tacit agreement on some ground rules is established between the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead of throwing all the responsibility on Mr. Hammarskjöld, we should have come forward with a concrete charter of what we understood by the independence, the development, and the neutrality of the Congo. This could then have been negotiated with the neutrals and the

Communists. Instead, we advanced vague resolutions and left it up to the Secretary-General to interpret them, putting him into the position of assuming personal responsibility.

Though in this manner we achieved temporary tactical gains, we may well have mortgaged the future position of the Secretary-General as well as that of the Congo. It may be argued, of course, that the Soviet Union was not interested in stability and would therefore not have accepted our charter. But quite apart from the fact that it would have been useful to make the Soviets' intransigence evident, the course adopted forced the Secretary-General to attempt to impose on the Communist countries a course of action that was highly distasteful to them. It was against all reason to expect them to accept at his hands what we thought they would not even consider if a formal proposal had come from us.

MOREOVER, by not defining our position, we deprived the Secretary-General of any real bargaining power. Rather than seeking to adjust conflicting views, he was forced to develop his own definition of stability. This had the practical consequence of exposing him to direct conflict with the Communist states and with some of the African countries as well. It is clear that the office of the Secretary-General cannot survive the determined opposition of the Communist bloc together with that of some of the neutrals. The Secretary-General should never be put into a position of being the sole originator of policy. For he will then either come under violent Communist attack or else will be forced into serving as a spokesman for a kind of neutralism that adds its pressures to those of the Soviet bloc or that uses the United Nations as a means to further national ambitions. Thus the Ghanaian and Guinean troops in effect have taken advantage of the mantle of the United Nations to pursue their own national policies in the Congo.

In short, in a situation where a great deal depended on the ability to be both specific and firm, our approach was uncertain and abstract. We proclaimed stability in circumstances where all criteria of judging

it had evaporated, and we offered no others to take their place. The chief result was to sharpen the contest for Africa rather than to ameliorate it, and to raise issues about the structure and operation of the United Nations that would have better remained muted. The noble purpose of "strengthening the United Nations" is turning into a means for weakening it.

A Lonely Job

In dealing with the new countries, we obviously have to do much more than engage in a mere popularity contest for their favor. We must show sympathy and support for their efforts to realize their economic aspirations—to an extent considerably beyond our current contribution. We must respect their desire to stand aloof from many of the disputes that divide the world. On many issues we can work closely with the new nations, and on all issues they are entitled to our understanding and sympathy. But we must not expect that either our sympathy or our economic assistance will be paid for with short-term political support. Unpleasant as it may be, some situations are conceivable where we may have a duty to act without the support of the new nations, and perhaps even against the opposition of some of them.

Though we naturally prefer to be popular, we cannot gear all our policies to an attempt to curry favor



with the new nations. We cannot undermine our own security for illusory propaganda victories, because the safety of even the uncommitted depends on our unimpaired strength—whether they realize it or not. As for the uncommitted, we must make it clear to them that they cannot eat their cake and have it too: they cannot ask us to respect their neutrality

unless they respect our commitment. And they cannot remain uncommitted and expect to act as arbiters of all disputes at the same time.

We thus face two contradictory dangers: we can demoralize the new nations by drawing them into the political relationships of the cold war, but we can also demoralize them by making a cult of their non-commitment and acting as if only incorrect United States policies kept them from taking sides. The latter danger may be the more insidious because it is the more subtle. We have to face the fact that in major areas of the world, constructive programs as well as defense depend largely on us. Compassion, understanding, and help for the new nations must not be confused with adjusting all policies to their pace. The cult of noncommitment could doom freedom everywhere.

As the strongest nation in the West, we have an obligation to lead and not simply to depend on the course of events. History will not hand us the prizes we seek on a silver platter. A leader does not deserve the name unless he is willing occasionally to stand alone. He cannot content himself simply with registering prevailing attitudes. He must build opinion, not merely exploit it.

WHAT IS INVOLVED here is a question of style as well as of substance. Moderation, generosity, and self-restraint are all desirable qualities in our relations with the new nations. But one receives credit for these qualities only if an alternative is known to be available. If we seem forever on the defensive, frantically striving to stave off disaster, and if we give the impression that we use world opinion as a substitute for developing our own purposes, our policy will seem to be the result of panic rather than of sober thought. Regardless of what they may think of the individual measures we advocate, our constant defensiveness and our erratic behavior may merely convince the new nations that we are doomed.

Even more important than a change in policy, then, is a change in attitude. We will finally be judged not so much by the cleverness of our arguments as by the sustained purposefulness of our actions.



An Economist's View Of Our Unfinished Business

ARTHUR F. BURNS

THE OUTSTANDING social achievement of our times has been the expansion of economic opportunity in our country. We had great prosperity during the 1920's, but the fruits of that prosperity were not shared widely enough. We carried out major social reforms during the 1930's, but in the best year of that decade close to eight million men and women were unemployed. We practically eliminated unemployment during the 1940's, but a huge part of people's savings was simultaneously wiped out by inflation. Poverty, unemployment, unstable money—each of these has been a great destroyer of opportunity through the ages. These obstacles to progress appear smaller as we face the tasks of the future.

Let me cite a few facts on the spread of economic opportunity and well-being. First, jobs have been generally plentiful in recent years. Opportunities for useful work have increased for women as well as men, for the elderly as well as the young, even for the physically handicapped.

Second, a progressive shift has been under way from low-paid and unskilled occupations to well-paid and more interesting work. The professional, scientific, and managerial group is growing rapidly and already accounts for over a fifth of the nation's work force.

Third, small and independent businesses continue to be an im-

portant gateway of economic opportunity, despite the giant corporations that seem at times to surround us. Over four and a half million independent concerns are presently engaged in various types of business and their number is growing. Indeed, there are more business firms today, both absolutely and in relation to the size of the nation's work force, than there were ten, twenty, or thirty years ago.

Fourth, our progressively rising national income is being shared widely. The ownership of a good home, an automobile, a refrigerator, an electric washer, a television set, has become the rule rather than the exception in American family life.

Fifth, the disruptive forces of the business cycle have at last been brought under moderately good control. The recessions of the past twenty years were merely pauses in the general advance of prosperity. Not only that, but their impact on the lives of individuals has been blunted through unemployment insurance, the growth of pensions, flexible taxes, better corporate management, a sounder banking system, and a somewhat nicer adjustment of governmental policies to the needs of the economy.

Sixth, the pace of inflation has been materially checked in the past few years. In consequence, we may have greater assurance that the savings accumulated through our bank accounts, savings bonds, insurance

policies, and pension funds will remain intact for meeting life's contingencies and opportunities.

THESE EXTENSIONS of economic opportunity are a moral as well as an economic achievement. Far from being an isolated development, they are merely the most recent installment in a long history of progress. Amidst all the conflicts, exuberance, and turbulence of history, one fact that repeatedly stands out is our determination to seek progress by expanding freedom and opportunity. Can there be any doubt that individual liberty and equal opportunity are and must remain our basic ideals? I do not think that many of us want merely to live in peace, have a steady job, and enjoy an abundance of bread, automobiles, or symphonies. We value and want all that, but we value still more the practice of freedom. We want to remain free to choose our occupations, to live where we see fit, to worship God as our conscience dictates, to speak our minds without fear, to choose as our governing officials those who we think can serve us best, to work for ourselves or for employers of our own choosing, and to spend or to save or to invest as we think proper.

This is the great message of freedom and opportunity which America first gave to the world and which Communism is now challenging aggressively. If our message is ultimately to triumph, we must diligently practice its principles. It is characteristic of freedom and opportunity that they can evolve and expand indefinitely, and that is why a free society will always find new things to do. In today's troubled world the two tasks that seem most urgent are, first, to continue aiding the poorer nations whose peoples are restlessly seeking improvement and, second, to make a greater effort to draw into the stream of progress those who have been left behind by its onrush in our own land.

Those Left Behind

Despite the high level of employment in recent times, substantial unemployment has persisted in some communities in different parts of our country. The problem posed by these depressed areas is not new, as anyone familiar with ghost towns