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The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory

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BOOK REVIEW

THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS FUDGE FACTORY

John Franklin Campbell. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971.
pp. ix, 292. \$6.95.

There are few Americans who in recent years have not sensed increasingly that our foreign policy and its execution were inadequate. Not only have our relations with the other great powers been tense or virtually non-existent, as in the case of China, but we have had few friends among the world's neutral powers as the result of Viet Nam and our penchant for aligning with and supporting reactionary regimes throughout the world. At the same time we have virtually ignored the needs of aspiring, developing countries, paid little attention to the sentiments of the majority of members of the United Nations, once our support of the majority held in earlier years was lost, while our allies have had to stand by, embarrassed and confused, hoping to be consulted, but despairing that their council would receive much attention in our policy-making process.

Has foreign policy-making always been so clearly deficient? Is our policy-making system the result of poor constitutional planning by the Founding Fathers, or is the recent foreign policy malaise due to inadequate leadership, poor organization, weak personnel, or simply the relative inexperience of the United States in behaving as a great world power? These are some of the questions suggested by this very interesting and provocative book.

Although the late John Franklin Campbell was clearly aware of the multiple sources of difficulties in formulating and carrying out an enlightened and coherent foreign policy, his main theme in this book is that the weakening and, at times, near total displacement of the Department of State as the chief source of Presidential guidance is the principal reason for the major mistakes since World War II, culminating in the Viet Nam fiasco. He views this displacement as the result of an ideological shift from "old" to "new" diplomacy after World War II.¹ Instead of concentration on the maintenance of peace through extensive negotiation, face-saving settlements, and a hands-off attitude toward the internal affairs of other nations, the "new" diplomacy neo-Wilsonian, was based on a world vision encompassing villains and good guys.

¹ Campbell, ch. 2.

In addition to the ideological shift, State was the victim of the actions of three men: Franklin Roosevelt, Senator Joseph McCarthy and Henry Wriston. The first virtually ignored State during World War II, reflecting a long-held distrust of Foreign Service officers to whom he referred sarcastically as "the profession of perfection."² After what Campbell considers a brief flowering of State, 1947-50, under two strong Secretaries of State, George Marshall and Dean Acheson, a period of true professionals, of whom Llewellyn Thompson, Robert Murphy and Foy Kohler were outstanding examples, the onset of Senator McCarthy's demagogic attacks destroyed departmental morale and discouraged entrance of gifted young people into State.³ Finally, in an ironic turn of events, after the Senator from Wisconsin had done his best to destroy popular confidence in State, Henry Wriston, president of Brown University, headed a committee whose report delivered the coup de grace.⁴ The hearty influx of new members to "democratize" the Department and other "reforms" of Wristonization lowered quality while increasing the number of State Department employees. The effect was to minimize entry of newcomers and swell the number of those at senior levels, most of whom entered laterally.⁵ By the end of the 1960's, there were some 24,600 personnel on State's payroll,⁶ with almost half engaged in administrative work. Between 1967 and 1969 there was a drop of nearly 50% in the number of total applications for the Foreign Service exam.⁷

Only a few of the proposed reforms of State as suggested by Campbell can be mentioned here.⁸ In addition to a 50% slash of personnel, he proposes adoption of some of the integrating and coordinating proposals set forth in the Hoover Commission reports and reports made during the Johnson administration. Essentially, they would provide fewer, and more respected chiefs supported by younger and more talented indians. The model sought seems to be a pre-war, or pre-World War II, type of State Department, a small band of wise and experienced counselors to whom the President and the nation would turn for foreign policy planning, advising, negotiation, with confidence that their mistakes would be few, and who

² *Id.*, 114.

³ *Id.*, 114 ff.

⁴ *Id.*, 119 ff.

⁵ *Id.*, 125.

⁶ *Id.*, 133.

⁷ *Id.*, 142.

⁸ *Id.*, 147 ff.

would help Presidents achieve for the United States a more successful long-term role in a peaceful international community.

The restoration and improvement of the State Department by itself could not, in Campbell's opinion, accomplish the needed reform. What is also necessary is to diminish or eliminate the role of the upstart rivals of State—the military, normally acting through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CIA, USIA, DIA, and other operations in the intelligence community, and the White House office entourage.⁹ To accomplish all or any part of this wholesale revision is obviously a tremendous undertaking. Ignoring for the moment the difficulties presented, one might ask why these rivals of State emerged and whether Campbell sustains his case for diminishing their role in foreign policy.

The emergence and flourishing of these ever-growing post World War II organizations is attributable chiefly to the fears of President Truman and his successors that the Soviet Union and a world-wide Communist movement threatened the "free" world and its self-announced leader—the United States. Viewing the Communist movement as essentially monolithic and aimed at the overthrow or subversion of free nations, whatever their political coloration, American leaders thought it essential to develop a mammoth intelligence apparatus capable of providing detailed information, analyses, and estimates covering every portion of the world. Each of the services, and State as well, continued to provide intelligence inputs, but the vast though undisclosed sums made available to CIA, its huge though unknown size, and its virtual freedom from effective Congressional scrutiny, gave it strategic primacy in foreign policy decision making, only weakly countered by the eventual creation of DIA as a joint service intelligence organization to safeguard the viewpoints of the Joint Chiefs and the military services. Users of CIA reports and estimates have had mixed reactions over the years of its existence. Over-classification of materials, pretentious studies of esoteric subjects, commonly with vague, hedging conclusions, have been all too common. The cloak of anonymity and the use of numerous investigators frequently made for pallid, homogenized products, often of little value to the President and his chief advisors. Yet, much the same could be said of many of the efforts of the intelligence branches of the services and DIA. Rapid shifting of

⁹ *Id.*, chs. 6-9.

personnel, poor allocation of personnel resources, the need to fall back on the lowest common denominator of agreement when the services tried to reach a joint agreement, made it difficult for the armed services to counter-balance CIA. Similarly, the intelligence branch of State frequently found itself unable to exert substantial influence, in spite of what it considered its greater expertise in world affairs. In some country or area sectors there might be radical differences of opinion between the lowest working members and the officer who reported to the Director of Intelligence of State, or he, in turn, in reporting to the Secretary, but since a position had to be taken, there was a tendency on many matters to reach agreement all too readily. From sources that seem quite reliable, there were instances in Washington during the Kennedy administration when the President would summon younger officers in State to give their own, uncensored reports on a particular problem area or current development.¹⁰

Finally, there was the increasing development around the President of a coterie of appointed advisors, who, through their constant availability and enjoyment of Presidential trust, came to play a collective role in the 60's that was unprecedented and outside formal American political theory. Supposedly, the Secretary of State should be the President's chief advisor in foreign affairs. For Truman, the revered General Marshall and a supremely confident Dean Acheson obviated the need for a White House advisory group. As we learn more about the Eisenhower years, it is apparent that his secretary, John Foster Dulles, although allowed to run from place to place, building anti-Communist alliances and hurling challenges to the Soviet Union and the Communist "conspirators" in other parts of the world, was constantly pulled up short by Eisenhower whenever he threatened to involve us more deeply in China, Southeast Asia, and other places where the holy war against Communism might be fought. The President at least had the acumen to avoid committing land forces to Asiatic wars, though in deference to the "holy war" ideology he maintained the nation's curious support of Nationalist China, and various United States agents flitted in and out of the Southeast Asia turbulence of the 50's. In a curious epilogue, Eisenhower, who appeared largely disinterested in

¹⁰ In 1968 after the Tet offensive in South Viet Nam, a "blue ribbon" panel of President Johnson's advisors, after being briefed by Secretary Rusk and other hawks, heard the opinions of lower ranking officials of State, the CIA, and Pentagon, without the presence of their superiors. As a result the panel recommended that the war be de-escalated and negotiation tried. W.L. O'NEILL, *COMING APART* (1971).

most world or domestic problems and trends, warned the nation against the power of the "military-industrial" complex, a warning that was largely lost on his Democratic successors.

There is no need to recapitulate in detail the unfortunate events of the 1960's. President Kennedy, the son of an isolationist father, spoke eloquently of America's role as defender of free peoples everywhere.¹¹ Surrounding himself with pragmatic, tough-minded academicians and intellectuals, he showed personal sympathy for the developing nations of Africa, and proposed the Alliance for Progress in Latin America, while on the other hand allowing a distorted view of World Communism to justify aligning the United States with reactionary regimes in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. His supporters tried, but without much success, to minimize his role in the Cuban "Bay of Pigs" invasion attempt, but it was under his leadership that an internal struggle for power in South Viet Nam was converted into a full scale war between North and South. Infatuated with counter-insurgency plans and doctrines, he reportedly insisted over military objections that the green beret be adopted as the official headpiece of our specially-trained Viet Cong killers. From the 685 men allowed the United States by the 1954 Geneva Accord, (which provided also for an election and possible reunification of North and South in 1956 — called off by Diem with Eisenhower administration support because of the certainty of the regime's defeat), the American presence grew until it consisted of some 17,000 military and 7,000 other specialists by the time of the President's assassination in November, 1963.

Employing many of his predecessor's tough-minded anti-Communist and anti-revolutionary advisors, President Johnson, who as Vice-President had made a hawkish report to the President after visiting Southeast Asia, exhibited a fierce determination not to lose a war which represented in his mind, as in his predecessor's, a crucial confrontation with World Communism. Glossed over by both Presidents, however, was the relative indifference of China and the Soviet Union to the internal struggle in South Viet Nam before the United States intervened. Once the United States widened the struggle and

¹¹ For a critical survey of President Kennedy's foreign policy attitudes and acts see R.J. WALTON, *COLD WAR AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION: THE FOREIGN POLICY OF JOHN F. KENNEDY* (1972). This reviewer agrees with Walton's basic analysis of the Kennedy regime's shortcomings in foreign policy making, largely concealed by the President's eloquence and the willingness of the brain-washed American public to blame the Communists for all the nation's foreign difficulties.

chose to support with arms a series of ineffective and unpopular leaders in South Viet Nam, the Communist powers, by now wary adversaries themselves, had little choice but to provide weapons and other materials to the North, and through the North, to Southerners opposing the government of South Viet Nam.

Tonkin Bay, heavy bombings that produced dreadful civilian casualties in both North and South, devastation of villages, forests and farms, and American casualties that finally produced an outcry at home, became part of each American's experience through TV and other media. Gradually, courageous reporters, and a few newspapers that refused to knuckle under to the administration, conveyed to at least a substantial number of Americans the true nature of the struggle in Viet Nam, and the hopelessness of achieving results that might benefit the people of Southeast Asia or further valid interests of the United States. The 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic to prevent a revolutionary takeover, an action that had precedents extending back into the last century, perhaps gave President Johnson false confidence that all that was needed in Southeast Asia were more men and more firepower. Urged on by his military advisors and Secretary of Defense supported by his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, and the hawkish academic, W. W. Rostow, President Johnson committed more and more men, money and prestige to the war, while casting scorn on the ever growing body of academic and other opponents of the war.

When McNamara, his brilliant and one-time supremely confident Secretary of Defense, eventually lost faith in the war effort, he was eased from office, and replaced with a familiar face from the Truman era, Clark Clifford, who turned out to be far less hawkish than anticipated. Finally the disastrous 1968 New Hampshire presidential primary convinced the President that he had lost the confidence of the American people, who in spite of the Administration's lack of candor and distortion of facts, finally recognized that the discrepancy between the administration's promises and deeds was too great. Too many men and too much money had been sacrificed in vain.¹²

Johnson's politically astute successor, President Nixon, promised to end the war, and began to wind down American

¹² Even if the New York Times version of the PENTAGON PAPERS (Bantam, 1971) is less than impeccable scholarship, it is significant in opening the eyes of non-academic readers to the strange ways of foreign policy-making and execution in the 60's, and should serve as a text for future Presidents of "how not to do it."

ground force participation, thus reducing casualties. His task was complicated by the need to save face, retain the support of the anti-Communist militants in the right wing of his own party, and, if possible, divert attention to other aspects of foreign affairs that might balance the agony of Viet Nam. While withdrawing American ground troops, heavy use was made of air and naval power, and negotiations with the enemy were begun as part of his overall strategy. Agreement with the Soviet Union on nuclear weapons was one achievement. Most astounding was the decision to break with the past and seek at least a modest accommodation with the Chinese, stunning the pro-Nationalist China wing of his party as well as Democrats who had feared the label of "soft" on Communism. In 1972, with the Russian exit from Egypt, President Nixon achieved a diplomatic victory in that area and found the Egyptians interested in improving relations with the United States. Compared with the dismal Democratic record in foreign policy during the 1960's, it was a virtuoso performance that the President and his chief advisor, Henry Kissinger, spread before the American people. While the role of the Secretary of State seemed diminished, the President also rejected the more extreme military demands, and concentrated on the art and practice of negotiation.

Perhaps only a President with a long and impeccable record as an unrelenting Communist fighter could have taken these steps without alienating large segments of a public long taught that to be soft on Communism was equivalent to treason. Instead, there was widespread approval of his individual actions and overall program that promised to relieve world tensions and gave hope of ushering in an era of peaceful relations among the major powers. To some observers it meant a relinquishment of the role of the United States as world policeman, determined to smash Communist or leftist regimes, regardless of their nationalist orientation.

This crude survey of some of the leading events in recent foreign policy may seem only tangentially related to Campbell's major themes in "The Foreign Affairs Fudge Factory." But, to this reviewer at least, while Campbell makes a good case for having a smaller number of persons threshing about in foreign policy matters, it is unlikely that such a reform is likely by itself to be decisive in improving the way we plan and execute our relations with the rest of the world.

Unless Congress is prepared to assume a greater, sustained

role in foreign affairs, a prospect which is possible but unlikely, the initiative lies with the President who picks his own sources of advice and chooses from competing proposed courses of action. Whether he values most highly advice from State, the USC, Joint Chiefs, the CIA, or members of his own staff, will depend on his affinity for, and confidence in, the analyses and judgments they propose. In other words, one can agree with Campbell's proposal to cut back CIA, USIA, AID, Defense and State but without any realistic expectation that foreign policy as made and carried out by President Nixon or any future President will be different, better, or even more orderly.

One way of testing Campbell's proposition that a return to a smaller foreign affairs establishment will prove highly beneficial, is to look back to an earlier era when we had a small defense establishment, no CIA, JCS, AID, USIA and the State Department, a very modest establishment, presumably advised President as the need arose—the very model Campbell proposes. Yet, having stood behind the Monroe Doctrine, with the aid of the British, for most of the 19th Century, the nation plunged at its end into imperialist ventures in Latin America, and, through dollar diplomacy, cast a pall upon relations with the Southern Hemisphere that has never dissipated fully. Three Republican Presidents, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft each shared in those ventures. But even Woodrow Wilson, who, as his biographer Arthur Link concluded, was ill-prepared to conduct foreign relations,¹³ teamed with the idealistic and equally ill-prepared Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan, to intervene in Mexico and other Latin American countries, all with the best intentions. Essentially, these men, like so many American political leaders and other opinion shapers of past and present, were convinced that the United States had achieved ultimate success in devising and advancing democratic constitutional institutions. Therefore, as Wilson and Bryan saw it, other, lesser governmental forms of other nations within our sphere of influence should be replaced whenever appropriate opportunities appeared. It was simple to delude most Americans by citing affronts to American citizens, business interests, cruelty of native officials, and other rationalizations. The concept of American superiority, and a failure to see the world except through American eyes, gave a peculiar cast to American ideology which at home stressed, in theory at least, equality of rights and self-government. These aspects of American foreign

¹³ A.S. LINK, WILSON (II): THE NEW FREEDOM, ch. IX (1956).

policy have been obscured by the nation's rejection of a European role following World War I, and the belief of many Americans that isolationism had been the traditional American way. This isolationist impulse was terminated by F.D.R., who was largely his own Secretary of State. One need not adopt all of the revisionist's argument to recognize that the President, believing that European civilization was threatened by German-Italian expansionist policies, acted to rouse a reluctant nation, and behaved with less than scrupulous neutrality. In all this, the President acted with the assistance of a number of close advisors, such as Harry Hopkins, Averill Harriman and others unidentified with the professionals in State.

For better or worse, the Constitution and historical practices have given the President powers in shaping foreign policy that are not explainable by conventional separation-of-powers theory. The formal agencies that supposedly assist and advise him lack effective constituencies in the nation (the military being a possible exception). Thus, while agreeing with Campbell that reorganization and redirection of the various supportive agencies may promote efficiency, it seems doubtful that there is any way of compelling a President to seek the best advice, and men, or, if he finds them, to ensure that he will accept and use them. At least to this reviewer, it is men and ideas which play the significant part in foreign affairs — organizational forms are of secondary importance.

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