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UNITED STATES COMMITMENTS AND ALLIANCES:
SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE CHANGING
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Edwin H. Fedder

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Since 1947, the United States has constructed a global network of "interlocking" alliances that were designed to extend an American guarantee to any "free" nation which might come under (the threat of) an attack by a "communist" nation. The alliance policy of the United States, best exemplified by NATO, established a pattern which was different from those which preceded America's entrance into big power politics after World War II. This new role encouraged American decision makers to reject notions of national separation, non-alignment, neutrality, and non-involvement not alone for the United States but for others as well. This resulted in a very rapid expansion of the number of alliances involving the United States—we are allied with 42 nations.

Although they hardly seemed so in their temporal context, our early post war steps were rather halting and hesitant when compared to some of our more recent adventures. The Truman Doctrine asserted a guarantee and implemented limited technical, military and economic assistance programs to Greece and Turkey. The Marshall Plan was little more than a concept until it was operationalized by the "users," the Committee for European Economic Cooperation. And NATO was developed at least as much in response to European demands...
as to American initiative.

In other parts of the world, our profile was considerably lower. The Rio Pact of 1947 was designed to implement the multilateralization of the Monroe Doctrine that had been articulated in the Charter of the Organization of American States. By and large, we were virtually non-participant observers of developments in the Middle East, South-Southeast Asia and Africa. We occupied Japan, offered some aid and comfort to Chiang Kai-shek and were content with the division of Korea.

Our foreign policy in that now distant period was pragmatically determined. The USSR alone had the capability of doing us great harm. Since capability was widely held to be father of the deed, diminishing that capability would reduce the likelihood of the deed. Capability might be reduced in two ways: (1) internally by the adversary itself; or (2) externally by reason of disproportionate increases in the capability of one of the adversaries vis-à-vis the other. Since the U.S. could not assume that the USSR would unilaterally diminish its own capability, such diminution would have to be imposed upon the Russians externally, if at all.

In essence, the assorted steps taken by the Truman administration in the brief period from 1947-49 added up to a foreign policy which was designed to contain Soviet power and influence from spreading in Europe. The underlying assumptions of that foreign policy
begged the question of Soviet expansionist intent. Nor did that policy evince significant self-analytical preoccupation of American decision makers with notions of grand designs or even pre-determined sets of preferred future behaviors. No ideological traumas were induced by accommodation to fascist governments in Portugal and Spain or to the communist government of Yugoslavia. The decision was made to effect a diminution of a Soviet threat that was based upon assessment of Soviet capability, not Soviet ideology.

Truman's foreign policy was articulated in ideological not pragmatic terms. The coup de Prague, the Berlin Blockade, Russia policy regarding the Baltic States, etc., were presented as evidence of the depravity and essentially limitless ambitions of Stalin to extend his domain. Such articulation catered to popular and Congressional emotions and were calculated pragmatically to marshall sufficient support for the programs. Such articulations also inadvertently reinforced the development of often virulent anti-communist movements best exemplified, perhaps, by the career of the late Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin. At the risk of straining the analogy, anti-communism became for the Truman Administration a Frankenstein monster bent upon the destruction of its creator.

As the Truman-Acheson foreign policy was pragmatically determinate, the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy was ideologically
determinate. Dulles viewed communism as monolithic and predatory. Communist states, including China, were viewed as extensions of Soviet power and as instruments for achieving Soviet designs for global domination. To meet this threat, the Secretary sought to ring the Soviet bloc with multilateral alliances designed to accomplish for the Middle East (through the Baghdad Pact) and South-Southeast Asia (through SEATO) what NATO was presumed to have achieved for Europe. This structure was to be buttressed by a variety of "commitments," patterned after the Truman Doctrine, and by bilateral alliances with Taiwan and Japan. Indeed, in very few years, the United States was engaged in proliferating alliances and commitments with virtually any country which proclaimed itself anti-communist and which indicated interest in such an alliance or commitment.

The NATO and Truman Doctrine models proved to be very seductive to Dulles despite the fact that the necessary and sufficient conditions for NATO did not hold elsewhere and despite the fact that the culprit in Greece (the raison d'être of the Doctrine) was not Soviet expansionism but Yugoslav meddling in troubled waters. The Baghdad Pact did not arise out of Arab states' perceptions of imminent Soviet threat, nor was its structure and organization based upon Middle Eastern precedents. Indeed although intended to link Arab states, only one joined, Iraq,
precipitating a revolution and subsequent withdrawal. Although
the name was changed to Central Treaty Organization, CENTO, Arab
rejection remained total. SEATO's experience was parallel: it
did not arise in response to indigenous demand, it did not re­
present indigenous perceptions of threat and only one principal
local state, Pakistan, joined. Pakistan has since entered into
alliance with China (the principal target of SEATO) against India,
while retaining membership in SEATO.

Apparently, CENTO and SEATO have been dysfunctional rather
than functional to the conduct of American foreign policy to
the extent that they have been counterproductive rather than
productive of greater increments of security for the United States.
Both CENTO and SEATO were viewed as thinly veiled attempts to
perpetuate or reintroduce colonialism and imperialism into their
respective regions. As such, they were perceived to be far more
threatening than was Soviet behavior.

Dulles' conviction as to the utter depravity of Soviet ambi­
tions led him to insist that nations that did not support the
United States were ipso facto aiding and abetting the USSR. Na­
tions that were willing to place themselves on the firing line
were entitled to the strongest practicable levels of American sup­
port. Fence straddlers discovered rather quickly that they could
virtually guarantee American support by threatening to turn to
the Russians if the United States balked.

By the end of Dulles' tenure, every state that perceived or claimed to perceive a communist threat or threatened to go over to the other side, was embraced in a commitment that was nurtured by United States technical economic and military assistance. Receiving American assistance became a major industry for many national economies. While it would be difficult to determine the motives of government officials in receiving countries, it certainly seems clear that the production of side-benefits far exceeded the additional increment of security produced.

The Dulles alliance ring served as a sort of Berlin Wall separating hostile camps. Two global spheres of influence were separated by the ring with each of the superpowers tacitly agreeing not to intrude in the other's sphere. It was essentially a rather passive arrangement in which discordances occurred infrequently and usually on our side. Many critics argued that we had adopted a largely defensive posture designed to react to communist initiatives, thereby according to the enemy the advantages of selecting the timing and location of probing manoeuvres.

In addition, we sought to eat our cake and have it by adopting a policy of massive retaliation that was either inconsistent with global containment or sufficiently non-rational to be unfeasible. Massive retaliation required, by definition, raising the
stakes of responding to communist challenges so high that had such challenges occurred, the threatened response would have been unlikely or catastrophically excessive. Other than adding significantly to United States defense costs and to the rhetoric of the Cold War, the concept of commitments was neither particularly viable nor operationally significant.

Upon coming into office, the Kennedy Administration shifted to a policy of flexible response which was designed to increase American capabilities for fighting limited conventional and nuclear wars. The concept of commitment was thereby made viable and operationally feasible. The increased mobility and striking power of United States forces was capable of flexible initiative as well as response. The new administration was convinced that responding to challenge was inherently too limiting and uncharacteristically too passive for American foreign policy.

A new scenario emerged that indicated that communism was spreading too easily and too rapidly in the underdeveloped world because it operated in a void left by the passivity of democracy. Were the forces of freedom to enter the struggle and provide an alternative, communism could be placed on the defensive. Thus, we begat nation-building and counterinsurgency, as if we knew what we were about regarding either of those elusive notions.

Dulles' conceptualization of commitment as rewarding those who chose our side in a bipolarized global alignment was not
terribly threatening since it did not suggest efforts at rolling back the perimeters of communist domain. In contrast, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations redefined commitment as an active, aggressive concept. We articulated a commitment to resist by force attempts at forcible conquest. But we also asserted a commitment, particularly in Vietnam, of creating conditions that would alter the status quo by substituting positive change in lieu of passive acceptance. This was dramatically evidenced in pressuring Diem to invite United States military intervention, in the assassination of Diem, in the Tonkin Gulf incident and others.

The Nixon administration's vaunted lower profile is still taking shape; however, some preliminary observations concerning commitments and alliances may be suggested. First, bilateral or multilateral alliances assume significantly lower priority than in the four previous post-war administrations. While preferring negotiation to confrontation with our declared adversaries, we have preferred confrontation to negotiation with our principal allies. The failure to consult with Japan or, less significantly, Taiwan about the opening to China signaled a major devaluation of our bilateral alliances with each. The Japan-U.S. Security Pact can no longer be looked upon as the keystone to our security policy in Asia. The first Kissinger mission communicated a sense
of urgency to Japan to begin making its own arrangements for accommodating China. Any possible interference in such signals was taken care of by floating the dollar and imposing the 10% surcharge on imports without notice, much less consultation or prior attempts at negotiating differences.

The keystone to our European security policy, West Germany, was the other prime target of the new economic policy. Certainly Germany's Ostpolitik was reinforced if not given added impetus by American unilateralism. It should be recalled that Brandt's first articulation of the Ostpolitik was met by sharply hostile reactions from the Nixon administration on the grounds that it would inherently weaken NATO. The alliance, then, was to be preferred to detente which was an elusive target at best. Today, it would seem that detente is a higher order of priority than is the Alliance.

A related item should be noted although full discussion would carry far beyond the limits of this paper. The Nixon administration demonstrates little concern for the nuances of multilateral diplomacy so vigorously championed by its predecessors. The new economic policy was invoked in a fashion more reminiscent of de Gaulle's unilateral demands upon the Common Market than of the Kennedy Round tariff negotiations. Cynical grandstanding on the Chinese representation question at the UN was not calculated to
protect and defend UN interests while promoting our own—yet they were not incompatible. The United States wants less salience for the UN, not more. Similarly, it seeks less salience for the various alliances. It apparently exalts the American national role, rejecting the binding ties of internationalism, wispy and limp as they are.

The Nixon-Kissinger conceptualization of commitment is essentially passive, reminiscent of Dulles' usage. But there is an important difference. Dulles' passivity was rooted in a conceptualized international system that was bipolarized in two implacably hostile camps. The ring of commitments and alliances represented the frontier of American concern—the outer perimeter whose breach might invoke retaliation upon a massive scale directed against the opposite pole. The Nixon-Kissinger commitment is rooted in an essentially non-polarized international system comprising national units, states, that interact according to agreed upon rules of behavior found upon long standing custom and usage. States base their activities upon national interests; i.e., national values are more significant than are international values.

Comparing Nixon-Kissinger policy regarding Taiwan to that of Eisenhower-Dulles illustrates the contrast very well. During the Korean War, the United States undertook to station some forces upon Taiwan and to mount a naval patrol of the Taiwan Straits. These
devices were continued after the war to underscore our commitment to defend Taiwan from an invasion by the Communist Chinese that was neither imminent nor likely to become imminent. At the same time, it "guaranteed" that Chiang Kai-shek would not attempt to launch an invasion of the mainland. The United States presence assured that a Chinese solution would not be promoted, that the conflict between Taiwan and the mainland would be frozen indefinitely.

The Nixon administration is apparently promoting conditions that might be favorable to a Chinese solution to the Taiwan issue once Chiang Kai-shek departs the scene. While remaining committed to aid Taiwan in the event of invasion, we no longer accord credibility to that threat. Consequently, in the fall of 1969, we decided to withdraw the destroyer patrol from the Taiwan Straits for budgetary reasons. Since China had long demanded such removal, along with trade and travel relaxations, as a precondition to "normalizing" relations, conditions were ripe for a diplomatic move. Robert Kleiman reported that:

In these circumstances, Secretary of State Rogers on Nov. 7, 1969, secretly cabled the American Embassies in Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei to notify those Governments that the regular Taiwan Straits Patrol would be discontinued for
budget reasons on Nov. 15. Taipei complained bitterly in private.

But within days after the unannounced suspension of the destroyer patrol, Peking's representatives in Hong Kong were asking whether the move had any significance. They were assured that it had.

There can be no doubt that the present administration attaches little significance to perpetuating commitments to states which it considers to be peripheral actors in the international system. Our concerns vis-à-vis the lesser actors are minimal except as they affect relations among the primary actors. United States' interests in Vietnam, for example, are secondary to United States' relations with China. Viewed this way, United States-Vietnam policy should not determine United States-Chinese policy; indeed, our position in Vietnam is probably expendable if such would promote our interests with China.

As set forth in these pages, a pattern emerges that traces shifts in American concepts of alliances and commitments through five post-war administrations. We noted first, under Truman-Marshall-Acheson, the development of a pragmatic, limited policy of "containing" the USSR in Europe by means of NATO and the Truman Doctrine. Second, we noted under Eisenhower-Dulles, the assertion of bipolarity
accompanied by proliferating alliances and commitments built upon the NATO and Truman Doctrine models and designed to contain the spread of monolithic communism anywhere on the globe. Under Kennedy-Rusk, third, we began the search for détente in Europe while activating our Asian commitments by embarking upon nation-building and counter-insurgency warfare in Indochina. Under Johnson-Rusk, fourth, while continuing the pursuit of détente with the USSR, our escalation of the war in Vietnam was accompanied by increasingly rigid articulations of commitment. Under Nixon-Kissinger, finally, we noted significant devaluation of alliances and commitments, as well as of international organizations, as instruments for achieving United States national foreign policy objectives.
Obviously, the concepts upon which our policies have been based have changed. The interesting question arises as to what effects such changes have on policies and ultimately on outcomes. If the concepts underlying a policy are false, the policy is likely to be non-efficacious or even dysfunctional. If the concept is true, the policy may still be non-efficacious or dysfunctional. The effects of policies upon outcomes are rarely direct. In dealing with foreign policies especially, we often have difficulty identifying intervening variables, much less accounting for them. Yet the concept employed determines the premise upon which a given policy may be based. If the premise is fallacious, so too must be the policy. If desired ends are still achieved, the achievement must be attributable to unprogrammed intervening variables or to something other than the stated policy.

Virtually any policy decision effectively narrows the range of options available to a decision maker. Frequently, the range of options that had been available prior to decision was so imperfectly understood that changes in the range are difficult to perceive. Consequently policy makers (and critics) often disregard the changing circumstances as if to ignore what is uncertain will remove ambiguity.

When the United States enters into an alliance or undertakes a
commitment with a nation, such an act alters United States' relations with that nation and others. Probably the most important effect is the impact of such "ties" upon reduced flexibility. The reduction in flexibility, however, may be virtually imperceptible despite the numerous references to the strength and viability of commitments made by policy makers and scholars.

No alliance or commitment, for example, acts as or stimulates an automatic or even predictable response. All that the parties "guarantee" is to undertake appropriate response according to each party's constitutional procedures. Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty includes a statement that is typical of the most specific undertaking. It reads, in part:

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all, and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them . . . will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. [italics added]

What is appropriate or necessary may range from verbal support to the direct entry of military forces into combat. Neither
alliances nor commitments transform the decision-making processes of the parties to the extent that the decision to take specific action remains no longer discretionary to each of the parties. Indeed, much of the history of NATO has encompassed discussions of the ways by which the American commitment to provide physical military support to the European allies can be made credible. The American military presence is hostage to the credibility of the guarantee.

Short of an attack by the Soviet Union against a European ally, the American response remains speculative. Specific contingency plans may be put into effect or, in the context of the crisis, new decisions may be reached. As is well known, searching for information, including breaking out old contingency plans, diminishes with the intensity and urgency of a crisis. A Soviet attack would change the whole ball game and necessitate a revaluation of the elements that go into making the critical decisions. There is a tendency in the literature to gloss over such considerations by assuming that the range of options has in fact been significantly narrowed. But, a cursory glance at history will demonstrate that anticipated predictable and obvious responses are not necessarily made. Even during an invasion, the target country has a choice of responses. In 1968, Czechoslovakia chose to submit rather than resist invasion by Warsaw Pact forces.
Decision makers will frequently justify their decisions as having been forced upon them by circumstances; however, such justifications are patently false. This is not to state that decision makers may not be victims of self-deception although instances of such self-deception are probably far less frequent than are lapses of memory and poor judgment. In point of fact, he who makes a decision cannot evade the responsibility for it by passing the buck to alliance requirements or to prior commitments.

In *The American Threat*, James L. Payne asserts that ousting Castro from Cuba in 1960 or 1961 would have created a "credible deterrent threat" to "future communist thrusts--in Laos, Vietnam..." The author argues that not only are American policy makers bound by numerous (unstated) commitments, but that such commitments have been thrust upon them because the United States is "a nation following an ongoing deterrence policy."

Obligations or commitments are, to a large extent, thrust upon it [U.S.]. It has values which are challenged by opponents; it has set precedents in defending them. These values and precedents create expectations about a nation's future behavior. And that is, analytically, what threats or commitments are: the expectations of others. Leaders can, of course, refuse to meet these expectations and suffer
a corresponding loss of reputation. But it is not in their power to eliminate, without cost, a specific threat.

To understand this conclusion, it is helpful to examine the nature of the most general threat we project: to defend any free world country against outright communist attack—should our assistance be necessary to defeat the attack.\(^3\)

Payne is seized by the germ of an idea that was nurtured in a hybrid culture of official propaganda, establishmentarian scholarship and ahistoricism. The germ is to be found in the fact that commitments and alliances generate legitimate demands upon the parties. As a function of an alliance or commitment, each party may reasonably expect the other party or parties to take some appropriate action. Payne, among others, carries such commitments to the point of inferring that the obligation extends to the dispatch of American troops upon the demand of a second party. Were this the case, the most critical decisions involving American strategy would be made by a host of foreign officials for their own purposes.

The nature of a commitment may be quite different from its articulation in official statements. United States policy in Vietnam cannot be explained as living up to our commitments to defend the territorial integrity and political independence of South Vietnam.
Quite the opposite is the case. In 1954, we accepted the terms arrived at in Geneva providing for reunification of Vietnam following a plebiscite to be held in 1956, and prohibiting the introduction of foreign military personnel or material. Eventually we opposed holding the elections and pressed military assistance, including personnel, upon a reluctant Ngo Dinh Diem.

Our adventures in the 1960's were not a function of military commitments to sundry regimes; but resulted from preoccupations with notions of strategic policy which could only be implemented militarily. It was thought that carefully developed strategic policy could produce measured effects upon target actors. Yet the effects of discrete decisions upon the choice patterns of others are usually indeterminate except in simulated environments. Step-level increments of escalation designed to "compel" the other side to acquiesce or submit may make good sense in terms of simulated experience but are not the product of historical research. One defense strategist predicted, in 1965, that North Vietnam would relatively quickly be brought into line by bombing because Ho Chi Minh was no longer a guerrilla and would not chance having his newly industrialized economy destroyed.

Defining situations and posing solutions for vexing problems is a difficult process even when perfect information is available. In the arena of foreign policy, information is usually scarce and largely unreliable. Situations are defined on the basis of scanty
information that is likely to be erroneous. The margin of error
tends to be high in the best of conditions; and the margin tends
to increase exponentially as conditions deteriorate. But, the
opportunities for refuting such definitions of situations are
equally hampered by scarcity of reliable information. And the burden
of evidence generally rests upon those who reject definitions of
situations and posed solutions.

Because of information scarcity, the foreign policy community
tends to respond to hypotheses and theories that purport to make
sense out of otherwise unmanageable or unintelligible data. Such
hypotheses and theories offer keys which promise to unlock the
secrets of international behavior. Notions such as the "balance of
power" and "domino theory" are advanced as if they were accurate
descriptors even though little agreement has been reached as to the
components of power and the mechanisms of balance and even though
nations and dominoes share no logical or analogical properties.

Under such circumstances, it should come as no surprise that
plausible arguments often substitute for logical arguments. Neither
should it be too surprising that decisions of war and peace are often
based upon plausible not logical arguments. Contending theories and
arguments are frequently selected on aesthetic grounds rather than
on the basis of their intrinsic efficacy. If a theory or argument
sounds convincing, decision makers and others may be convinced.
Plausible arguments or theories find particular acceptability when tied to predictions of dire consequences if prescribed action is not taken. Thus, failure to position elements of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Straits would have resulted in the "loss" of Taiwan to mainland China; failure to intervene in the Dominican Republic would have resulted in the accession of a Castro-like government; failure to defend South Vietnam would have resulted in the fall of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, etc. Each of these statements is a non sequitur in that the conclusion does not follow the stated premise.

By definition, a non sequitur is an invalid statement. An invalid statement cannot serve as a rational premise for making decisions on policy issues. The practice of statesmen in articulating non sequiturs is widespread and may be condoned as an attribute of political license. The use of non sequiturs by scholars is also widespread and should not be condoned because the product of such non sequiturs is and can only be nonsense. When policymakers turn to scholars for advice and counsel, they should be better served.

In the (newly written) introduction to A World Restored, Henry Kissinger asserts that: "Whenever peace--conceived of as the avoidance of war--has been the primary objective of a power or a group of powers, the international system has been at the mercy of the most ruthless member of the international community." This is
presented as axiomatic, as an unassailable proposition. Yet, it cannot be axiomatic since the avoidance of war by a power or a group of powers is not logically related to the mercy of the ruthless. Two unstated assumptions may be gleaned from the statement: First, that war is a function of the avoidance of war; and second, that the quest for peace rather than stability results in disequilibrium which will likely lead to war.

In discussing stability, et al., Kissinger illustrates another logical fallacy which permeates the literature, tautological reasoning. He states that "whenever the international order has acknowledged that certain principles could not be compromised even for the sake of peace, stability based on an equilibrium of forces was at least conceivable."  

"International order" is not defined but may be contextually derived as a function of "legitimacy" which "means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy." And stability is a function of legitimacy, "having resulted not from a quest for peace but from a generally accepted legitimacy." Thus, international order = legitimacy = stability = order. And the notion is reduced to a tautology incapable of explanation or of description.

Any power "which considers the international order or the manner of legitimizing it oppressive" is a revolutionary power and all
"relations between it and other powers will be revolutionary."

Adjustment of differences will be "tactical maneuvers to consolidate positions for the inevitable showdown, or as tools to undermine the morale of the antagonist." Diplomacy ("the adjustment of differences through negotiation," "the art of restraining the exercise of power") is impossible in relations with a revolutionary power; it is replaced either by war or by an armaments race.

Kissinger suggests that the pursuit of peace with a revolutionary power jeopardizes stability because it places the international system at the mercy of the "most ruthless" power. In arriving at this conclusion, he reifies concepts so that: "ages... search," "international order has acknowledged," and "states may die..."

The lesson of *A World Restored* is clear: we must confront revolutionary powers with sufficient force to compel their acceptance of legitimate international order. Measures short of a threat or use of force will endanger stability. So long as the disputants accept the principles of international order (as in the Middle East), stability may be maintained by means of equilibrated forces. If a disputant is revolutionary (such as North Vietnam), entering into negotiations would jeopardize the stability of the international system. But revolutionary powers may always avail themselves of the option of accepting the rules thereby becoming nonrevolutionary. Thus, the government of North Vietnam could make negotiations at Paris possible by agreeing to (1) refrain from using force, (2) release prisoners, and (3) recognize (de facto) the legitimacy of the government of the Republic of Vietnam.
Examined in the context of Kissinger's "theory" of international relations, the Nixon-Kissinger conceptualization of alliances and commitments appears to contain prominent doctrinaire elements which are quite dissimilar to Dulles' ideological constructs. Kissinger apparently finds differentiating between communist and non-communist states essentially uninteresting from the standpoint of classifying state behaviors. To Kissinger, the critical question is whether or not a given state is revolutionary or stable ("legitimate"). Communist states may or may not be revolutionary; hence, may or may not be threatening. To Dulles, the threat posed to non-communist states by communist states was inherently functional to communist ideology. Revolutionary regimes were threatening, therefore, if and only if they were communist.

Examined out of the context of Kissinger's "theory," the policies adopted by the Nixon administration appear to bear more resemblance to the pragmatism of Truman-Acheson than to the foreign policies of the other post-war administrations. But, examined in context, the dissimilarities are striking.

The principal contrast between Kissinger and Acheson arises in their views of the international system. Kissinger posits a closed system comprising national actors each of which does its own thing according to implicitly codified rules of behavior. States
that reject the rules, threaten the stability of the system; therefore, they must become legitimate or be suppressed. Kissinger argues that dysfunctional behavior by one state or a group of states threatens the maintenance of the delicate equilibrium established by international order.

Acheson's approach was sharply different. He tended to reject all notions of an international system as the plain or fancied gibberish of social scientists and poets. Acheson's pragmatism insisted that "solutions" may only be devised for concrete problems. He was not interested in such abstract concepts as international order, stability, equilibrium, or legitimacy. Neither was he concerned with reinforcing proper international etiquette. Finally, Acheson did not accord much significance to adjectival "descriptors" such as revolutionary, communist, legitimate, peace-loving, or democratic.

To Kissinger the means employed by the United States are designed to achieve an end which is a more orderly world system. To Dulles the means were designed to achieve the end of preventing monolithic communism from engulfing the world. To Rusk, the means were often ambivalently designed to achieve rather ambiguous ends, such as rapprochement with the USSR while reversing the tide of communist advances in Southeast Asia particularly and the Third World generally. To Acheson, the means of foreign policy was what it was all about.
FOOTNOTES


10. Kissinger, p. 3.