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Editorial Book Review

The Case Against American 'Rigidity'

WHAT'S WRONG WITH U. S. FOREIGN POLICY. By C. L. Sulzberger. Harcourt, Brace & Co. 255 pp. $4.50.

THE place was Rangoon. It was the autumn of 1957 and the weather was oppressively hot and sultry. C. L. Sulzberger, roving diplomatic correspondent for the NEW YORK TIMES, was in town to record for several hundred thousand subscribers the activities of the murderous, if affable, Burmans. But Mr. Sulzberger was plainly fed up.

Outside his hotel, a noisy Buddhist festival was in progress. Inside, the air was filled with swarms of small green insets. Burma was a bore. Seemingly, a monumental bore.

Consequently, Mr. Sulzberger picked a somewhat meatier subject for his newspaper column. It had little to do with his exotic locale. It was the first of a series of icily penetrating essays on the weaknesses of United States foreign policy.

In all, there were six columns. In WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, Mr. Sulzberger has extended his remarks and added a summary that fairly throbs with righteous indignation. But for all its anger and "destructiveness" it is an immensely wise and valuable book. It should be read by thoughtful Americans in and out of the government.

There will be those—as the author notes in his preface—who will dismiss these criticisms as mutterings of an unfriendly expatriate. Mr. Sulzberger has spent little time in the United States recently. He has lived abroad and traveled almost continuously. He has never even voted. He is neither a Republican nor a Democrat. His present home is in Paris. But no matter. He is an American and, what's more, an extremely perceptive American. Few people writing regularly for U.S. newspapers today have a firmer grasp of the realities of world politics and the necessities of national survival.

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, however, is no ivory tower exercise. It is a work of journalism, keyed directly to today's headlines and the Big Issues of the late 1950s. But from these headlines and day-to-day crises he draws a timeless moral. It is that rigidity is suicide.

All nations and all political systems must adjust themselves to changing conditions in order to survive, he argues. It is America's failure to heed this lesson of history that has placed it in the global fix it is now in.

When World War II ended in 1945, the strategical position of the United States could be described as good. Today it is very, very poor.

Why? Mr. Sulzberger's answer is cruelly precise.

"We and our allies have forfeited bastions one by one in the Middle East and Asia," he writes. "The Arabs are in arms, for the most part against us. The Chinese mainland has slipped away. We lost our brief atomic preponderance, and Soviet Russia, after an amazingly fast recovery, has become a superpower in every sense.

"During this startling change in international balances, we have not, however, adjusted our basic foreign policy. We have vacillated between fake slogans of 'containment' and 'liberation' from communism, achieving neither. We have built up in friendly but unstable countries military machines their economies cannot support. We have sought to create *status quo* situations where none before existed and we have avoided their creation elsewhere even when such a condition was possible. In this unsatisfactory situation, we survive in nuclear stalemate, an equilibrium of terror that cannot forever endure."

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HAVING staked out the situation in general, Mr. Sulzberger proceeds to dissect it in detail.

The result is a fascinating but somewhat frightening promenade through a gallery of diplomatic failures.

Mr. Sulzberger's indignation is genuine. He pulls no punches. If he fails to score a knockout at the end any impartial referee would have to concede him the contest on points.

His targets are not drawn from any one party or any one administration. He finds fault with both the Democrats and the Republicans in their handling of world affairs. Nor does he take the easy way out and heap all our foreign policy woes on the shoulders of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. "Senators, who criticize Dulles, with justification, for some of his actions might criticize themselves with equal justification for permitting him to take such actions," he writes "for whether the secretary of state is right or wrong in his judgments, he is almost forced by our system to make and apply such judgments."

Mr. Sulzberger is not a defeatist, however. He refuses to buy Bertrand Russell's supine preference for Soviet domination rather than, if all else fails, a desperate nuclear defense. He is a reformer. But he is a reformer without a definite program. He merely insists that we must revitalize ourselves and that foreign policy which expresses our intentions in the world. "This," he says, "requires daring—including the daring to admit and correct mistakes. The alternative is timidity. And the ultimate fate of timidity is failure."

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THE author's refusal, for the most part, to deal with possible solutions is one of the book's weaknesses. One cannot help but feel that he is qualified by experience and intellect to prescribe a course of treatment. But he insists on assuming the role of the diagnostician.

Likewise, Mr. Sulzberger deliberately avoids a discussion of what is right with U. S. policy. Surely the good in us deserves some kind of examination, too, if we are to get any kind of decent perspective on our problems. The author acknowledges this possible criticism but dismisses it—and not too convincingly. "After all," he says, "if one visits a doctor for diagnosis of one's gout, one is not interested to hear that teeth, hair and heart are all in sound condition. One wishes only to learn what causes the aching joints. The gout of the United States is easily to be discerned."

Admittedly, Mr. Sulzberger does a superb job on the gout. He discusses in searching detail how U. S. foreign policy is administered generally, then speeds on to probe several tender spots.

He examines, for instance, the international war of words ("The United States has lost the initiative in its propaganda contest with the Soviet bloc") noting that in stressing material things America gets into a rigged contest with another kind of materialism. And, incidentally, he has some brutally frank observations to make about the effect of the South's race problems on the nation's moral image.

There are equally revealing discussions of NATO, the ailing "grand alliance"; foreign aid, with its over-emphasis on military assistance; the Middle East, where "we have been hampered by a paucity of first class minds familiar with the area's intracacies" and have made appalling mistakes; Asia, where our China policy has been frozen by wishful thinking ("We confuse diplomatic recognition with political approval.")

"At the heart of the matter rests confusion, even among those who govern us, concerning the nation's real desires," Mr. Sulzberger writes, sadly. "We have allowed our policy to become synonymous with anti-communism. This forces us to sacrifice both sense and flexibility. Anti-communism alone is no policy. Hitler discovered this."

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MR. Sulzberger pleads for both sense and flexibility. "Everything in life contains the seeds of its own destruction," he says. "This is true, as Marx saw, of capitalism. It is also true of communism. All systems must adjust themselves continually in order to survive. Rigidity is doomed. By the time any truly perceptive genius can interpret history's constantly changing laws, those laws again have changed . . . We must prepare for an enduring contest. In this we can never afford to abandon our principles. But we cannot maintain them practicably unless, in the process, we survive. This is the task of our foreign policy."

Mr. Sulzberger has written a provocative book. Some will be distressed by its bite and bitterness. But that is all right, too, for some Americans have to be shocked into an awareness of every serious national problem we face.

From The St. Louis Post-Dispatch

THE FEATHER AND THE TON

DMITRI Shostakovich has written a musical comedy, in an effort to bridge the gap between serious and light music, and its premiere in Moscow tends to prove a point. The point is that the practitioner of successful light arts is not necessarily a would-be serious artist who could not quite make the grade—and the serious artist could not necessarily toss off a light masterpiece if he was of a mind to.

The Shostakovich score is reported consisting of "sweet melodies that are rescued from simplicity only by lively orchestration." Or, to put it more bluntly, no hit tunes. If George Gershwin could not write CREATION OF THE WORLD, neither could Darius Milhaud write S WONDERFUL. T S Eliot's efforts at light verse are very sad. Others than cobblers, we suppose, should stick to their lasts, and what difference if it is light as a feather, or heavy as a ton?

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A Florida TV interviewer, trying to heckle Gov. Herman Talmadge of Georgia, asked: "Governor, can you tell us how you feel about so many of Georgia's native sons leaving your state to come and live in Florida?" Talmadge smiled and replied: "I think that it raises the level of intelligence in both states."—MEMPHIS PRESS-SCIMITAR.

How Russia Forced Ike's Hand On Summit Conference

By JOSEPH ALSOP

WASHINGTON

NIKITA Khrushchev's first dividend from his Berlin crisis is the serious discussion of a summit meeting that is now going on between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Harold Macmillan. If the President's hand had not been forced, he would not be talking with Macmillan about what to say at the summit. He would be trying to avoid going there.

Realism requires this admission that Khrushchev has had a considerable success already, in the sense of compelling the American policy makers to do something they greatly wished not to do. In a lesser sense, Prime Minister Macmillan has also had a success. Macmillan's Moscow visit, its European sequels, and the certainty that he would press the President very strongly for a summit rally, all combine to crystallize the reluctant American decision that a summit was unavoidable.

DUCKING AND DODGING

The record clearly proved the distaste of a summit meeting that is strongly shared by the President and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. For the past two years, they have used every imaginable dodge to avoid such a meeting. During all the first months of the Berlin crisis itself, they followed the same line. As in the past, the chief expedient was insisting that all the real work must be done by a foreign ministers' meeting, before the meeting of heads of state.

The President still says that a foreign ministers' meeting must "justify" the summit meeting. But the foreign ministers' meeting is no longer being used as a blocking tactic. The summit meeting is accepted as virtually unavoidable. That is the big concession.

Yet the fact that the American policy makers have been forced into this concession does not necessarily mean that the concession itself is a mistake and a misfortune. To begin with, our highest policy makers' reluctance to go to the summit had some pretty personal motives behind it. One such, for instance, was Secretary of State Dulles' almost passionate preference for doing all the negotiating himself.

The secretary is an admirably tough negotiator, but there are certain kinds of negotiations he cannot carry on. There are certain things which it may be desirable to say, that only the President can say with full authority. Equally, Nikita Khrushchev may have highly important things to say, which he cannot easily say through the mouth of Secretary Dulles' opposite number, the wooden Andrei Gromyko.

CURIOUS FORM

With regard to Khrushchev, in fact, the story of the summit agitation is highly suggestive. From the outset, the Kremlin's campaign for another rally on the heights took a most curious form. The first official call for such a meeting came from Nikolai Bulganin, then still official chief of the Soviet government. But the Bulganin call to the summit was solely aimed at the woollier sort of "world opinion." Since he demanded a meeting on the scale of an international garden party, Bulganin's official proposal was plainly designed to horrify any practical diplomat.

NEW YEAR'S TOAST

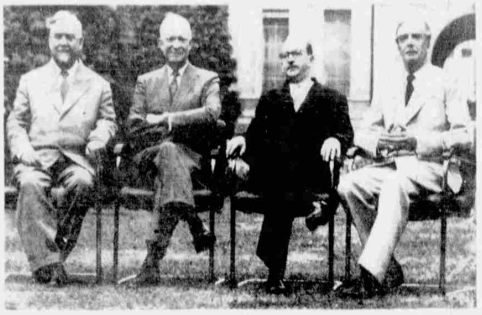
Concurrently with Bulganin, however, the man with real power in the Kremlin, Nikita Khrushchev, carried on a seeming unofficial campaign for a quite different sort of conference. He spoke first through semi-private persons like Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt and Aneurin Bevan. He finally made his proposal quite openly, in a famous New Year's toast at the Kremlin. What he proposed was no international garden party, but a meeting in a corner between himself and Eisenhower, with no other nations represented except the United States and the U. S. S. R.

Very obviously, Bulganin's proposal was solely intended to force acceptance of Khrushchev's proposal, as the more bearable alternative. Nonetheless, Khrushchev's message and his toast were firmly ignored by the State Department. Still seeking a chance to talk with the President, Khrushchev thereupon agreed to a summit meeting in the U. N. Security Council, which was only prevented by Chinese Communist protests. The same theme emerged again during Prime Minister Macmillan's visit to Moscow, when Khrushchev so brutally underlined his lack of desire to talk seriously with any Western leader except the President of the United States himself.

ONE JUSTIFICATION

For all these reasons, the able American ambassador to Moscow, Llewellyn Thompson, has advised the State Department that Nikita Khrushchev, almost certainly has something important that he wants to say in person, and to no one but Eisenhower. What Khrushchev has to say may be most unpleasant, but it is worth finding out what it is.

That is one justification for a summit meeting. The other justification is the chance the President will have to warn Khrushchev privately but solemly that he can push the United States just so far, but not a millimeter further.



Last Big-Four Conference (1955): Bulganin, Eisenhower, Faure and Eden

People's Platform

Implications Of Sterilization Act Are Appalling

Rt. 1, Pineville

Editors, The News:

I AM appalled and sickened by the implications of the Sterilization Act. What has happened to America the beautiful, the home of the free? Where are all the ideals of God-loving men? Taken over by men and women who are acting God?

May I suggest that every movie house in the state show a re-run of the pictures taken of the atrocities in Nazi Germany when the State became responsible for human life? That began with a simple, "useful" thing like sterilization. No one is going to be responsible for the abuses of this act except the people for they are forcing it upon us and the apathetic man in the street who is too busy to bother.

Where are all the ministers who write so copiously in your paper advising us to love our neighbour as ourselves for Christ's sake? Where are they? Where are all the people who stood up in all sincerity, during the glamor and excitement of the Crusade? Why so mute? When they stood up for Jesus Christ did they not realize that they also stood up for the brother or sister who is weaker than they and who needs loving help and not rejection to save money.

—KATHLEEN C. CLAYTON

Collect License Fees From The 'Outsiders'

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

CHARLOTTE'S city government is letting close to $100,000 in license fees slip by them every year. There are several hundred people who live outside of the city and state that travel back and forth each day, make their money in the City of Charlotte, and take it out and spend it in some other city or state. To get to the point that I am driving at, these people come here and give a price of so much money to do so and so which could be anything from cleaning floors to building a hotel. I will list a few of the various things that they set prices on. Digging ditches, pouring cement, laying brick, carpenter work, roofing work, sheet-metal work, painting, setting up plumbing, cleaning gutters, cleaning houses, grading yards, setting out shrubbery, putting gravel in driveways and a hundred or more other things that are done with set prices.

I am sure that a majority of the citizens will agree that anything that is done with a set price is regarded as a contract, yet these people have no liability insurance, no city bond or city license. Our city government is our city government and too many of the people are kept in ignorance by their dictators. . . .

We have much wickedness and crime in America, but as long as our nation recognizes God and religious freedom we will survive. The united prayers of Christian people can save America from all our enemies and overthrow Godless communism. We have more to fear from the enemies within our own country than we have from Russia or other nations. We should never elect any but true Americans to any public office, men who believe in God, and I do not believe in electing any women to public office. I think men should handle the affairs of state and government.

—PARKS A. YANDLE

Faith In God Keeps United States Strong

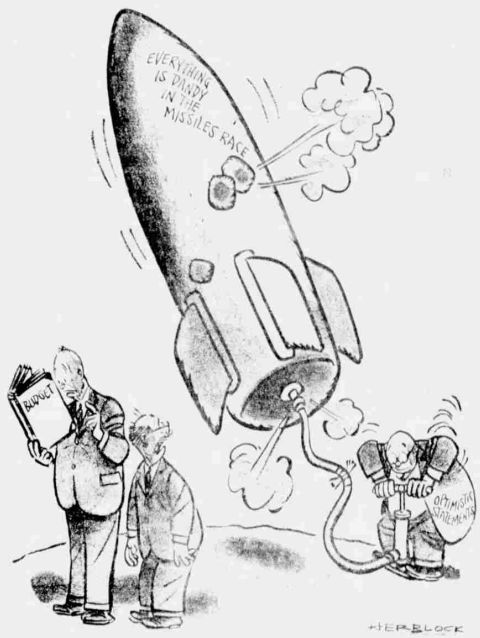
Charlotte

Editors, The News:

THE reason why America is the best and richest nation on earth is because our nation was founded on faith in God. Our forefathers gave us a Constitution founded on justice and states' rights, freedom for all Americans in the right to work, to vote and freedom of speech and of the press and freedom of religion. But since the days of FDR's New Deal socialism, great efforts have been and are still being made to destroy our freedom and constitutional states' rights government by our enemies and traitors who would like to see America destroyed. But they cannot and will not win because, under God, right will always triumph.

The reason why most foreign nations are always having rebellion and strife and hatred is that they do not have religious freedom.

'Uh Huh—I'm Getting Worried About Inflation Too'



All Farm Programs Offered Are Wrong

Salisbury

Editors, The News:

THE farmers get hurt in the United States first every time. I have read most of the proposals that have been offered to help farmers, but it seems that there is something wrong with all of them.

The large farmers who are really not farmers but capitalists have caused most of the large surpluses. If a man had to do his own farming and not hire somebody to do it for him we would do away with many of these surpluses.

There should be a farm corporation in America with government picking up its losses. But a man should not be allowed to own more than 160 acres of first class land or more than 640 acres of other land.

This kind of project put on a great business basis might have a chance of a vested. But of one thing we can be sure. Anything beat what we have now.

—J. W. JEWELL

News Readers Urged To Support Polio Bill

Charlotte

Editors, The News:

AS AN organization interested in community health and the well-are of all citizens, we are lending our support to the other interested health groups on behalf of the proposed polio vaccine legislation.

We urge our readers to write their representatives and senators in support of the proposed polio vaccination measure. We feel the benefits for all people will be great.

—JOHN C. GLENN, JR., M.D.
President
Mecklenburg County Tuberculosis and Health Association.

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

MacDonald's Visit Was A Sensation

WASHINGTON

MOST people watching the welcome given to Prime Minister Macmillan have forgotten the welcome given the first British Prime Minister to visit American shores. Comparison between the two sheds important light on the world's constant, sometimes discouraging search for peace.

It was just 30 years ago that Ramsay MacDonald, son of a Scottish servant girl, came to Washington and sat on a log with Herbert Hoover at his Rapidan fishing camp. His arrival created a sensation.

Closer Understanding

This was not because he had once been refused passage to Stockholm as a Socialist, not because he was once deported from Belgium as a pacifist, and not because he was the first Socialist Premier of England. His visit caused a sensation because he was the first Prime Minister to come to the United States and because his coming climaxed a long effort to bring closer understanding between what were then two rival and frequently antagonistic nations.

Every British Prime Minister since then has come to the United States, some of them half a dozen times. The exchange of Presidents and Prime Ministers across the Atlantic has become so commonplace we pay little attention to it. However, in the march toward peace, it's important to remember that the United States was once just as bitter toward the British Empire as we are today toward the Soviet Union.

It Was A Scoop

This newsman scored a scoop for the Baltimore Sun on the fact that Ramsay MacDonald was coming to the United States in October 1929—a scoop which was promptly and officially denied. When it turned out to be true, however, I was given, as a reward, a trip to New York to cover the Prime Minister's arrival.

At that time, "Big Bill" Thompson had been repeatedly elected mayor of Chicago on a platform of "Down With The King of England," while the New York Herald Tribune had been accusing its own Republican President of "sidetracking officers for ignorant diplomats" in the matter of a naval agreement with England. Anglo-American rivalry ranged from bitter to keen.

Mission Of Peace

So it created something of a sensation when the Prime Minister of England, greeted by the Irish mayor of New York said: "I come on a mission of peace . . . Whenever the work of the world has to be done, we will be found side by side doing it."

Storm Of 'Ayes'

Later, the Prime Minister mounted the rostrum of the House of Representatives where Adm. Sir George Cockburn had plumped his muddy boots in 1814, brandished the Speaker's gavel and shouted: "Shall this harbor of Yankee democracy be burned? All for it say aye." But in 1929 this other Briton's voice, vibrant with emotion and brimming with poetry, had wrung from his audience a greater response than the storm of "ayes" which greeted Adm. Cockburn a century earlier.

Yet even in October, 1929, the American-British climb up the hill toward better understanding was not easy. When MacDonald proposed to dismantle all British bases in Canada, Bermuda, and the West Indies, his cabinet in London abruptly and bluntly overruled him. And when President Hoover agreed to curtail construction of big cruisers, his admirals plus the big navy clique in Congress overruled him.

Not Always Thus

Today, big naval vessels are largely passe. British naval bases in American waters have been turned over to the United States, and the alliance between the United States and its onetime enemy is one of the firmest in history.