THE FABRIC OF AMERICAN OPINION
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
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I propose to discuss how public opinion on foreign affairs is formed within the United States and how it affects foreign policy. This topic was chosen because co-operation between my country and the United Kingdom calls for an understanding of the forces that shape public thought, not only on specific items, but upon the much more significant fundamental attitudes about broad issues.

Efficient diplomatic technique is not sufficient for the prolonged joint endeavours of two democratic world Powers all around the globe; the problem far transcends any such formal skill, for in democracies the will of the people ultimately prevails—occasionally in the short run as well as in the long. Indeed under some circumstances the public temper virtually relegates the diplomats to the sidelines. In the United States that has occurred in the matter of relations with Communist China, for example. We need to emphasize the long view when considering how the fabric of American opinion is woven. Over-emphasis upon immediate circumstances destroys perspective, so that the trivial dominates the profound. In particular, a short-range view makes personal equations seem much more decisive than they really are.

Certainly if we look at our problem in short perspective there is occasion for acute concern. As a kind of backlash of the war there is a jaded political atmosphere nearly everywhere. In the United States the same party has been in power so long that freshness has disappeared from its endeavours. Government has grown with extreme rapidity, taking on many new and staggering functions; effective administration has lagged far behind the enlargement of responsibility. The public is dismayed at the moral atmosphere of the government. There are no such great scandals as followed previous wars, like Teapot Dome after the first world war. There is nothing so bold in size and scope, nothing that can be easily cleaned up. Instead there have been mink coats for secretaries, deep freezers for officials, cameras for men of influence, hams (of less than 12 pounds!) for lending officers; they exemplify a low scale of public morals. The dominant tone is one of doubt about the fundamental trustworthiness of political leadership. It applies to both parties. If Mr Truman is regarded as guilty of 'cronyism' and of winking at shoddy practices, on the Republican side are Senator McCarthy and his backers. Fair play, sportsmanship, clean fighting are strikingly absent from the political ring. The public is tempted to say, 'A plague on both your houses'.
One of the tragic consequences of this doubt of official trustworthiness is impatience with honest mistakes; instead there is question that any mistakes are honest. The Hiss episode was not deeply significant because of what was revealed to the Russians; its importance lay in loss of faith in the alertness and the integrity of those at the top. This has turned discussion away from constructive criticism of errors in judgement toward sterile assaults upon personal integrity. Mr Acheson's policy in the Far East has been scarcely less successful than other foreign policies in the same region. Criticism makes no allowance for that fact, nor for mistakes of judgement; it never faces the possibility that the situation may have been insoluble—that no policy could have been successful. Rather, the suggestion is bruited about that the discredited policy must have been due to sinister disloyal influences.

If the government were noted for uprightness in small things, such a condition would not have arisen in the case of a man of probity, like Mr Acheson. The disintegration of confidence is a subtle process, and one which, as it develops, makes revision of policy progressively more difficult for honest men. Matters have now reached such a stage that there is little freedom of action on some issues; policy is frozen into immobility by public suspicion. The unhappy state of public opinion about official integrity cannot be overlooked in the consideration of present issues. Nevertheless it is an essentially transient phenomenon. Over-attention to it conceals the much more powerful and permanent forces which mould opinion about foreign affairs. These abiding features will ultimately determine whether two great peoples can work together through the years.

Among the fundamental influences which shape American thought on foreign affairs is the size of the United States and her tremendous diversity. In no other land mass, with such range of climate, contrasts in terrain, variety of racial stocks, and diversification in occupations is the policy of government controlled by democratic processes. That is a unique fact in history; it is bound to result in distinctive means and modes of action; those developed in other circumstances are not germane.

Fully as important as vastness in size as an apparent deterrent to coherent public opinion is the polyglot population of the United States. Every land and race are represented. There are 30 million residents of first or second generation European origin; there are 5 million more from Latin America, the Orient, and the Near East. Three million stem from the United Kingdom; 4½ million from Italy; 6½ million from Germany and Austria; 2½ million from Russia; nearly 3 million from Poland; 3½ million from Scandinavia, the Baltic States, and Finland; 2½ million from Eire. There are representatives in very great numbers of every nation west of the Bosporus and the Urals—Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, and so on. The figures are impressive in their sheer bulk. There are twice as many Jews in New York as in all Israel; there are more Italians in Chicago than in Taranto; there are more Portuguese
in Providence and eastward over Cape Cod than in most of the cities of Portugal; there are more Germans in Wisconsin than in Nürnberg, more Swedes in Minnesota than in Malmø or Uppsala, and more Mexicans in the South Western states than in any of the cities of Mexico except her capital.

Racial diversity, however, makes a positive contribution to the formation of public opinion on foreign affairs: it ensures the continuous infiltration of the points of view of countries from which the people came. The immigrants have become American citizens, but that does not mean they have lost all feeling for their homeland or have cut the ties of family and culture. There is, consequently, a steady flow of correspondence, much foreign language newspaper information, and a stream of travel back and forth. Thus the viewpoint of many European nations is brought to the United States in very persuasive form.

Often foreign origins are specifically highlighted in politics. In my own state, for instance, our senior senator is of English extraction (several generations in the United States), our junior senator Italian, our governor Irish, our secretary of state French-Canadian. That is a common example of the recognition of alien stock; what pertains in Rhode Island is true in numerous other circumstances. The Sicilian-born Mayor of New York has just made a spectacular 'good will' trip to Italy and Israel. Such dramatization of our mixed origins is never far from the surface in many cities and towns. There could be no clearer evidence of the significance of manifold cultural and political inheritances in the fabric of American thought.

This situation emphasizes another point of prime importance. Whatever may have been the case half a century ago, immigrants and the children of immigrants are no longer regarded as second class citizens; they do not suffer in the social scale. They are quickly absorbed into the stream of American life; in fact they have rather distinctive opportunities to influence, or even to decide, the course of public action.

Sometimes they complicate the conduct of foreign relations. Strategic location may give their influence disproportionate leverage. That was notably true in the case of the recognition of Palestine. As another illustration, one of the congressmen from my own state succeeded in getting through the House of Representatives an amendment to the Aid to Europe Bill which would have excluded the United Kingdom from participation in its appropriations as long as Ireland remained partitioned. He took advantage of skimpy attendance and a snap vote to achieve a propaganda victory, knowing full well that the action would be reversed, as of course it was two days later. Occasionally the presence of large bodies of immigrants from one region exerts a negative influence; the concentration of many Chinese and Japanese in California, for example, led to an unfortunate and unfair Exclusion Bill. It would be possible to cite other instances when our polyglot origins adversely affected international
The overriding fact, however, is that a century and more of immigration has resulted in the enlightenment of American opinion about Europe.

There are many first-hand contacts with other nations and their problems besides those arising from immigration. During the two world wars and their liquidation, millions of American citizens lived abroad in military service, in armies of occupation, and in civilian services. While that is by no means the best way to become acquainted with other peoples, it does provide some familiarity. Soldiers develop attitudes, good or bad, which persist over the years and become a deep and pervading influence. The distinctive point of view of the American Legion offers sufficient proof.

Furthermore, American civilians are inveterate travellers in other countries. During 1950 more than 575,000 people entered and left the North Atlantic ports of the United States. International air services carried over 1,700,000 passengers. The State Department issued about 300,000 passports, a greater number than ever before in history. More housewives received passports than any other occupational category; skilled labourers ranked second; other leading groups were students, clerks and secretaries, teachers, and executives. Of course, many persons used passports issued prior to that year. The number of business trips is enormous, for American investments abroad amount to over $31 billion. Much more than half, nearly $19 billion, is private investment; travel in connexion with business on any such scale is very large indeed. Such extensive business relationships involve continual analysis of the political, economic, and social conditions, and give many citizens significant first-hand information. Numerous organizations, like the International Chamber of Commerce, multiply the effect produced by individuals. An astonishing number of Americans, moreover, go abroad for pleasure. Sometimes their behaviour is not so welcome as their expenditure; but they do acquire points of view which they bring back and which have an influence upon their thinking and upon that of their neighbours.

Needless to say traffic is by no means all in one direction. The volume of British and European travellers to the United States is very large. In social contacts, business conferences, lecture tours, and in myriad other ways the points of view of the European side of the Atlantic are continuously expounded.

It might be supposed, from the vast size of the United States and the manner in which the foreign born tend to concentrate in their several groups, that opinion would be local and regional, rather than national. To some extent that is true; there is no such passion for the unification of Ireland in Kansas as in Boston; Palestine is of infinitely less concern to Montana than to New York. On the other hand, there are powerful countervailing forces. Travel is one. Americans tour not only abroad, but even more inveterately at home. One has only to watch the highways on a
summer day to feel that the whole populace is on the move. In 1950 there was one automobile to every four persons in the United States. The total number of visitors to the areas under the National Park Service was 33,249,645. The railroads carried 645,535,000 passengers, each an average of 64 miles. Domestic airlines carried 18 million passengers an average of 444 miles apiece.

Of course, tourism extends beyond the borders of the United States. Last year 2,060,048 American passenger vehicles entered Canada. In addition 1,233,928 people entered that country by rail, bus, boat, or aeroplane. Corresponding numbers of Canadians visited the United States. In the light of the intimacy of contact between those two nations and the extraordinary way in which Canada serves as a bridge between America and Europe by reason of her membership in the British Commonwealth, that degree of exchange of personnel is of great importance in the formation of public opinion.

Citizens of the United States not only travel widely, they migrate very freely within their own country. The Bureau of the Census reports that one-fifth of the native population lives in a state different from that of its birth. Moreover one out of five adults changes his residence each year. Such mobility exists nowhere else.

Once the Atlantic coast showed a deeper interest in Europe, whereas on the West coast the concern was primarily with the Pacific and Far East. More recently the interchange for business purposes, for social occasions, and through mere tourism and the frequent migrations of many American workers tend to mitigate that difference and to break down sectionalism. The fluidity of society has come to exert a more powerful effect than sectionalism so far as opinion on foreign policy is concerned.

Sectionalism has declined because of many other factors. The South offers a good illustration. At one time the region gave no promise of industrial development; its agricultural economy was based on slave labour. Today, however, in many parts of the South, as in Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Oklahoma, and elsewhere, enormous energy is being expended upon industrial and mercantile enterprises. Oil, sulphur, and natural gas have made Texas a great industrial as well as agricultural empire. The South has undergone a profound, and continuing, revolution. It is not alone in the swift rate of change. Industry has developed at a tremendous pace in the large agricultural states of the Middle West. The population of California rose 50 per cent in a decade and something like the same increase was felt in the other Pacific states. While the several regions of the United States still have characteristic features, and different economic emphases, the sharp line between the agricultural South and the industrial North East, the Middle Western farms and the manufacturing centres is disappearing.

This vigorous development has greatly stimulated interchange of goods, persons, and ideas. Transportation has progressed so dramatically
that refrigerated aeroplanes daily carry fresh vegetable produce from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic seaboard. With modern means of communication, advertising has reached such a scale that a product can be as well known in Oregon as in Florida, in Maine as in southern California. As national markets have been established, branch factories have multiplied. Both involve a continuous movement of personnel and a constant exchange of views.

Changes that tend to break down sectionalism multiply apace. Slightly more than two months ago a coaxial cable and a system of microwave radio-relay stations linked the Atlantic and Pacific coasts by television. The first coast-to-coast telecasts were the sessions of the San Francisco Conference at which the Japanese peace treaty was signed. The programme was widely advertised in advance, so that the public had a lively awareness of what was to transpire and a deep concern with the outcome. They could see dramatically, almost at first-hand, the effective cooperation of the United Kingdom and the United States; they observed the behaviour of the Russians and their satellites. At one point the slavishness of satellite dependence was so obvious as to border on farce. Such linkage of the whole nation is of deep significance. The power of new media to banish regionalism in the consideration of foreign affairs is enormous.

Also working toward unification are the board meetings of widespread educational, scientific, technical, industrial, financial, and fraternal organizations which provide one of the myriad means by which national as distinct from regional public opinion is being formed. Personal experience supplies an illustration. On the day of my return to the United States there is a trustees meeting of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: its twenty-four members come from seventeen states. I am also a member of the board of directors for an insurance company located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The trustees of that fund of over $2½ billion come from thirteen states and the District of Columbia—extending from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific coast. It would be impossible to estimate the number of such national meetings, but they would certainly extend into many thousands. The free expression of views at these meetings makes them enormously valuable in developing a national trend of opinion.

By no means to be forgotten is the great, and growing, power of the labour unions. The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations are nation-wide in membership. Their influence is both pervasive and powerful. Their leaders are acutely conscious of the international situation and the organizations take a lively part in the discussions of relations with other nations.

Another important factor in the formation of American opinion on foreign affairs is the vast number of women's clubs and of men's luncheon clubs. The League of Women Voters, the Association of University Women, and many such groups feel a mission to carry on the work of
adult education. All have a strongly international interest. The men's luncheon clubs—Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Gyro, and many others—call themselves 'international', and maintain that point of view. In addition to these, numerous institutions are directly committed to foreign affairs; the Council on Foreign Relations, for example, now has committees in twenty-four centres of population. The United States has been called a nation of joiners. It is an apt description; and with all their joining they have helped to unite opinion into national, as distinct from local or sectional, points of view. These myriad associations cut across lines of racial origin, economic status, social position, or group interests of any other kind. They help to achieve a democratic fabric of society and opinion.

Thus it is a mistake to think in traditional patterns about sectionalism in the United States. People in the Far West now have as much influence upon our European policy as the people in the East, and those in New England as much to do with shaping Pacific policy as the people on the West coast itself. Everywhere there is a deep concern about foreign affairs. Discussion of the role of the United States in international life frequently transcends domestic issues. So true is this that international politics may well dominate the personnel and party balance of our government.

This is the more striking inasmuch as the United States has been regarded as a world Power for scarcely fifty years, and as one of the greatest world Powers only since the first world war. For over a hundred years, from the war of 1812 to the world war of 1914, she had a relatively isolated position and inevitably developed an isolationist viewpoint. The history of British thought in relation to European affairs has been markedly influenced by the existence of the Channel; how much more potent in that respect was a location between two oceans.

Our lack of long tradition in international thinking struck me with tremendous force while I was teaching a freshman history section at Harvard in 1912-13. That was the year of an almost forgotten Balkan war. After class one day a Greek immigrant, who was working his way through college as a boot-black, came up to discuss the meaning of the Balkan strife as a prelude to a general European war. Since he was intellectually immature and uninformed in many ways, I asked him how he could speak with so much apparent sureness about so large an issue. With no hesitation he said: 'This is what we always talk about in the Balkans; my father, my grandfather, my ancestors have discussed these matters for generations; I have grown up with them'. In the United States only one generation has had responsible consideration of international problems upon a large scale.

The professional Foreign Service is comparatively young. It has not yet developed sufficient numbers or adequate depth of experience to attain the distinctive esprit de corps that exists in some older nations. Vital ambassadorial posts have almost uniformly been assigned to non-
career men; the top management of the Department of State has rested with persons outside the career diplomatic corps. There is no such established body of professional opinion as is found in the navy or the army, for example. Partly as a consequence of these facts, and partly for other reasons I shall mention, American foreign policy is more closely tied to public opinion than in countries where there is a strong tradition of professional diplomacy.

Never before in history and at no other place in the world has a government of continental size, actively controlled by public opinion, faced the issues that confront the United States, either in scale or scope on the one hand, or in complexity on the other. The dominant fact is not the difficulties which bedevil the formation of national opinion; the astonishing reality is the progress made in overcoming those obstacles.

It is customary to criticize the instability of American public opinion. A good deal has been said of the lurching from optimism to pessimism and back again. That conclusion can readily be documented as long as one deals with subsidiary and transient situations, such as progress, or lack of it, in Korea. The truly surprising revelation of the last five years, however, is the clarity with which the public has learned that isolation is invalid as a guide to policy. The firmness with which the public has grasped the idea that the future of the United States is indissolubly linked with that of the nations in the British Commonwealth is amazing. Comprehension of the essential solidarity of the Atlantic community has been unwavering. Moreover, American determination that the United Nations shall survive and develop into an effective instrument of peace and progress is not surpassed by that of any other people.

The importance of this for foreign affairs is clear. The Marshall Plan was indeed proposed by the Secretary of State, but it would never have been adopted nor administered with the steadfastness which has marked its career if the people had not grasped the validity of the concept. Since the Constitution forbids army appropriations for more than two years and inasmuch as the Marshall Plan and other forms of mutual assistance must be reviewed every year, the decisive facts are not the fevers of debate, but the central clarity of public purpose and consistency in performance. At the time of successive appropriations they have given overwhelming evidence of readiness to carry forward the co-operative programmes. No five-year plan by the Russians has been adhered to more effectively nor more intelligently. When American thought is denounced as emotional, this dominant stability needs to be remembered.

The public has also seized firmly upon the fact that aggression, wherever it appears, is so serious a threat to peace that it must be resisted. The people of the United States hate war; they fear it intensely and seek earnestly to avoid it. That being so, Americans might have felt about Korea as Neville Chamberlain did about Czechoslovakia in 1938: 'A quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing'. The Korean war is far from popular; none the less it has the firm, if un-
happy, support of public opinion; very few want to call quits, and bring
the boys home. There is genuine steadfastness of belief that resistance was
the only course available unless aggression was to be given a free hand
everywhere in the world. That programme they regarded as the sure road
to another world war.

Current narrow majorities and indecisive political leadership make
this steadiness a clear triumph of public opinion. It is far more remarkable
than what was accomplished under brilliant leadership, like that of
Woodrow Wilson or Franklin Roosevelt. Indeed, public opinion is often
sooner than the official view. One example, which has an important
impact upon foreign affairs, illustrates the point. It concerns inflation.

In recent months there has been marked evidence that people are
refraining from buying. Savings are upon a scale never before known.
During 1950 personal savings amounted to $12 billion; this year they are
running at the rate of $21 billion. Individuals are balancing their budgets
even though the federal government has no such courage. That is a
decision democratically arrived at; it is not the consequence of action by
an administrative group or by Congress. It is a consensus of opinion based
upon an estimate of the situation by every individual who interprets his
own interest in his own terms and suits his action to his conclusion.

The result runs counter to official and business expectations. When the
Korean crisis developed so suddenly there was a wave of scare buying.
Manufacturers and merchants assumed that developing pressures upon
the economy would induce continuance of such buying, and piled up
excessive inventories. The public taught them a sharp economic lesson.
Of course governmental restrictions on credit and instalment buying had
some effect, but not a decisive one. A review of the last five years suggests
that the public has had, on the whole, a more accurate realization of the
dangers of inflation than have federal officials.

In discussions upon the European side of the Atlantic the alternative
to national planning is often described as economic ‘chaos’ or ‘anarchy’.
The American public sees a third choice: decisions need not rest with the
administration nor with any private monopolistic group. The Sherman
Anti-Trust Act and its successors keep any cartel or other small group
from making decisive economic judgements for the nation. Effective
control is in the hands of all the people.

Decision is thus decentralized. This characteristic is accentuated by
mass production, which requires a mass market, which obviously cannot be
a class market. Such a broad market as mass production requires is
democratic by necessity—no-one can force people to buy. The will of the
people must prevail in that respect, at least. One of the tenets of American
faith is that this provides a more flexible economy and leads to less rigid
and arbitrary manipulation. The process is often characterized as the
‘automatic’ operation of the market. There is nothing automatic about it;
it is the consequence of a consensus achieved by the expression of indi-
vidual judgement in responsible economic action; it becomes effective
only when that judgement develops foci and gains actual control of the situation. That is economic democracy. It is one means by which American society is kept not only free, but flexible and dynamic; why class consciousness is dim and class struggle all but absent.

There is one final reason why public opinion exerts an extraordinary leverage upon foreign policy. It relates to an aspect of the American government which is very difficult to communicate. It consists of parallel phenomena: the federal character of the United States and the separation of powers. The federal structure permits the ideological disintegration of the two chief political parties; neither party can be called ‘left’ or ‘right’; each includes nearly the whole spectrum of opinion. Thus a representative or senator from Maine, New Hampshire, or Vermont (states where a Democrat is seldom elected) is often well to the left of a Democrat from the Carolinas, Mississippi, or Florida (states in the ‘solid South’). On the other hand a Democrat from Rhode Island is certain to be well to the left of a Republican from Ohio, Wisconsin, or Nebraska. National parties, therefore, are in effect federations of local parties.

Every four years some attempt is made to give them the appearance of ideological consistency for campaign purposes. Actual operation has shown that these shadowy party lines of thought are freely crossed on many vital issues. Thus a coalition of conservative Democrats and conservative Republicans (and it is essential to use the adjective in both instances) halted President Truman’s ‘fair deal’ programme. Although this sort of thing is more common when party majorities are narrow, it is by no means an unusual occurrence in the American government.

Sometimes it is said that a party is ‘captured’ by one ideological faction; it was temporarily true of the New Dealers, but usually the occurrence is largely mythical. The Democratic Party cannot remain in power without a union between the ‘solid South’ and the big cities of the North. If the ‘fair dealers’ under President Truman hold the party machinery, they do not control the views of the Southern Democratic senators; and thus by their action in joining a Republican group on that issue a balance was struck. From a rigid point of view this looks like disorganization to the point of demoralization. In a broader and more realistic perspective, it has beneficial effects. It allows local absorption of abnormalities. When, for example, a demagogue like the late Huey Long captures the political machinery of a state, his influence upon national party policy can be confined to very small scope.

The net effect of the federal character of American politics, therefore, is to reduce the danger of sharp partisan differences over the fundamentals of foreign policy. Superficial differences abound, emphases vary, but basic interests remain reasonably stable.

The leverage of public opinion upon foreign policy is increased, also, by the separation of powers. Legislation supported by the president can be defeated by his own party without loss of office and often without serious damage to his prestige. As the official leader of his party he has
some disciplinary power through patronage—the right to make nominations. However a heavy curb upon that discipline results from 'senatorial courtesy'. Recently the Senate declined to approve two federal judges in Illinois because Senator Douglas, a Democrat from that state, pronounced the 'magic formula' of senatorial courtesy. The failure of President Truman to consult him, he said, made the nominees 'personally obnoxious'. The use of that stereotyped phrase dooms a nomination to failure of confirmation. President Roosevelt, like practically every other president who attempted to by-pass the local senator of his own party, also found his nominees rejected, and his disciplinary control destroyed.

Senators, moreover, are often elected not because of the strength of the national candidate for president, but in spite of him. In 1948 Democratic Senator Lehman was elected in New York, when President Truman failed to carry that state. Senator Douglas and Governor Stevenson, both Democrats, were elected in the key state of Illinois in 1948 by vastly larger pluralities than President Truman. This local strength of the politician is often reflected in his independence of the administration in matters of policy.

The Congress thus becomes a forum beyond executive discipline. The effort of President Roosevelt to purge Congress of men who did not support him proved disastrous. Local sentiment resents federal interference with the choice of senators and representatives, who are always residents of their constituencies.

One constitutional manifestation of the separation of powers is the requirement that a two-thirds majority of the Senate 'advise and consent' to the ratification of a treaty. Taken in conjunction with the absence of effective discipline over the senators that constitutional provision has resulted in the upper chamber being called 'the graveyard of treaties'. A party majority almost never amounts to two-thirds; therefore a treaty can seldom be made a party matter. Even in the rare instances where there is a two-thirds majority, the independence of the individual senators is such that party lines would not necessarily hold. Only a clear dominance of public sentiment can ensure acceptance of a treaty.

The traditional organization of the Senate makes it even more difficult for persons outside the United States to understand the relationship between the president and that body. Committee chairmen are assigned their posts on the basis of seniority, not on ability or other relevant factors. Thus the senator who, as chairman, becomes the 'spokesman' for the administration often differs from the president on important matters. A chairman is in a position to block the president's programme in detail, if not on major questions. This is true of foreign affairs, as of other subjects. Recently Senator Connally expressed himself with marked vigour in opposition to part of the programme of mutual assistance which, as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, he was officially sponsoring. He also says he will oppose General Clark's nomination as ambassador to the Vatican.
Such intransigence is nothing new. In the days when we had one of our strongest Secretaries of State, the late Charles E. Hughes, and when all but one of the sixty-four treaties he negotiated were ratified during his period in office, a principal officer of the Department of State nevertheless wrote in his diary: 'the Senate is behaving like the devil, trying to take on itself the conduct of foreign relations'. The situation is even more difficult when, as happens occasionally, the Senate majority and the president are of different parties.

Once the separation of powers is fully grasped much apparent confusion of counsel disappears. The individual statement of a senator is often an effort to evoke a public response to the point of view he expresses, or it may reflect the demands of some of his constituents; sometimes it is said 'for the record', so that he can cite it in his campaign for re-election. Thus the importance of senatorial utterances as pronouncements on policy is brought into right perspective.

To the observer accustomed to parliamentary government, this confusion of tongues seems mad. It is undeniable that on occasion it leads to incoherence of policy. A recent amendment which has the effect of placing quotas on dairy products contrary to international agreements of the United States is a case in point. Such actions, however irritating to allies and embarrassing to officials, are usually not vitally important because they tend to be transient. Ordinarily, once their repercussions become clear, they are corrected with reasonable promptness.

Of far more fundamental significance than such superficial inconsistencies is the fact that the separation of powers gives public sentiment a means of finding expression in debates. In a land where elections occur only at fixed intervals, it makes the executive constantly aware of public opinion and its pressures, not alone as elections approach, but continuously. It induces a responsiveness between opinion and action which more rigid party discipline and a tighter relationship between the executive and the legislative would dampen.

Because of these peculiar characteristics of American politics, there should always be recognition of the distinction between the uneasy froth of the wave-like surface action of politics and the deep and powerful tides which manifest public conviction about policy.

As a leading Power the United States is new upon the world stage. If her efforts at co-operation and mutual security are to be successful, she must attempt to understand the way in which other democracies arrive at their patterns of action. It is equally essential that allies and friends should come to understand how the fabric of American opinion is woven. While opinion makes itself felt by processes quite different from the modes and methods developed in older nations, it is no less democratic, no less rational, and no less effective.

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