have been the subject of bitter complaint for many centuries. The destructive power of new weapons has frightened successive generations. Famine and plague long seemed historically endemic. The list could be extended almost indefinitely. Failure to appreciate the antiquity of urgent issues is simply a measure of our ignorance of the past. Any era studied intensively would reveal periods of crisis, wars, hunger, pestilence, tyranny, slavery, poverty and a host of other ills, most of which are lost to memory.

Beyond ignorance of the past there are four other reasons why we are so acutely aware of current crisis. The first is that weapons have attained a deadliness and a pace of development so great as to make war, always terrible, and long since a poor instrument of policy, seem conceivable only as a last and desperate resort. Like many other new concepts, this conclusion is new principally in being more widely held. After the First World War, Winston Churchill wrote: “Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat. It was not to give security even to the victors.” His judgment was seconded by Aristide Briand who said, “In modern war there is no victor. Defeat reaches out its heavy hand to the uttermost corners of the earth, and lays its burdens on victor and vanquished alike.”

The second reason for the heightened sense of crisis is that we have developed a greater sensitiveness to poverty, unemployment and ill health. Trespasses upon the individual personality to which the world was long callous now evoke a sense of outrage. The passing of colonialism is a manifestation of respect for the rights of man; domination of one group over another even “for its own good” involves an abuse that we no longer wish to tolerate.

The third reason why modern troubles seem acute is that the miracles of communication make us constantly aware of them. Every hour on the hour ills of the world of which our fathers remained blissfully ignorant are dinned into our ears and every morning are piled on our doorsteps.

Fourthly, we have had so many successes—from the conquest of tuberculosis, polio and many other diseases to the elimination of famine and the mitigation of poverty (for even our destitute are well-off compared with the poor of Asia)—that we feel frustrated when we cannot find a prompt remedy for every ill that man is heir to.

We should remember that as the scale of our difficulties has risen the resources available to meet them have also increased
enormously. It is because we are rich and powerful, with world-
wide interests, that the troubles of Southeast Asia or West Africa
harass us. But who would revert to the days of our poverty and
isolation in order to escape the cares that now concern us?

IV

For more than two centuries after the colonization of this
continent we paid little attention to faraway lands and strange
people. Subduing the wilderness was enough to occupy most of
our energies. None the less, individuals ventured afar; whalers
and traders made contacts. They expanded their activities for
many years before the government took action in their support.

In 1832 a New Hampshire sea captain, familiar with the perils
of American shipping in Asiatic waters, persuaded the State De-
partment that we should have treaties of friendship and com-
merce so that crews of wrecked vessels, and other Americans who
fell upon misfortune, should not be abused. He was furnished
some passports, a sheaf of letters of credence and full powers to
negotiate such treaties, at a stipend of six dollars a day. The
names of the countries to which he was to go and the names and
titles of their rulers were left blank; he was to fill them in himself.
The reason was stated with refreshing candor: “the titles apper-
taining to their majesties are unknown here.” Though the naiveté
of such a proceeding brings a smile, it nevertheless was adequate
for its day. Now, not only have our interests in those parts become
immensely more important, but there is dramatic change in the
sensitivity of the rulers. It will no longer suffice to confess an
amiable ignorance; that would be taken as a deadly insult. A
seasoned knowledge of every area is essential.

That prescription is easy to put in words; to put it in practice
is a task of monumental proportions in many parts of the world.
Language offers a convenient illustration of the difficulty. It is
frequently urged that our diplomatic representatives should
know the language of the country where they are assigned; but
often there is no “language of the country.” In one large and stra-
tegically significant nation there are said to be 200 languages, 20
“principal” ones. Even if the diplomat learns to converse with
official circles, he is still cut off from the mass of the population.

There are many other difficulties that confront us when we seek
to understand some of the newer nations with which we are called
upon to deal today. In many cases linguistic barriers retard the
development of true nationhood. In some advanced nations, such as Switzerland, that particular divisive force is overcome by other stronger forces of unity. But in the newer and undeveloped countries, where education has lagged, the countervailing forces are weak or non-existent. Thus many of the countries with which we must deal are not nations at all in the sense we understand the term. Though in the United Nations they may speak in tones of aggressive nationalism, domestically the government may have only titular control of large areas.

Cultural diversity intensifies the difficulty of attaining true nationhood. Even in mature countries, forces of separatism often have persisted. Our neighbor, Canada, despite its ardent national spirit, is compelled to pay careful deference to the reality of its two cultures. Scotland and Wales have shown a marked increase in self-consciousness which in its extreme forms amounts to nationalism. The deep cleavages between Flemings and Walloons in Belgium have been dangerously manifest in recent years. If such phenomena can be found in countries where the reality of nationhood is beyond challenge, how much more likely are they to be found in new ones. In some parts of Africa, for example, fidelity to the tribe is so much stronger than attachment to the state that the concept of nation has little meaning. Cultural diversities produce strains not only in Africa but in India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Malaya and several Latin American countries.

Cultural forces, moreover, are not governed by economic interests; indeed, they are virtually impervious to them. They may even be intensified when all the economic inducements call for unity. This is a significant limitation upon the leverage that can be exercised by money, through foreign aid or investment. Programs of assistance are not only made more difficult; there is always danger that they may exacerbate internal stresses already severe enough to imperil the integrity of the country.

On top of linguistic and cultural cleavages, there frequently is a sharp dichotomy in the national economic structure. Oil, minerals and other natural resources may produce great wealth side by side with rudimentary industry and primitive agricultural techniques. It would be logical that the wealth produced by one sector of the economy should be used to stimulate and improve the others. But since history is not a mirror of logic, the record is quite different.

To render changes in this situation even more difficult, eco-
nomic divisions tend to coincide with and accentuate ethnic, linguistic and cultural divisions. In the same nation one may often find a highly cultivated level of society existing cheek by jowl with depths of ignorance and degradation. In developed countries there has gradually come about a kind of moral revolution, so that when such situations are found to exist, an acute sense of guilt develops and with it a demand for reform. But just as the industrial and agricultural revolutions passed the undeveloped nations by, so also did the moral—or social—revolution, with the result that in many of them there has never developed an indigenous urge or method for reform. Indeed, bitter resistance to the creation of a more nearly unified society appears both at the highest and the lowest levels; the reasons are different, but the reluctance to change persists.

These are some of the realities—many more could be mentioned—which we must understand when we seek to help these nations. For us to be useful we must be wise as well as well-intentioned. It is a far cry from Edmund Roberts' mission of treaty-making in Southeast Asia in 1832, when a rough knowledge based on rugged experience sufficed. Today in addition to detailed knowledge and learning we must have enough imagination to enable us to enter into the experience of people of different ethnic origin, cultural heritage and economic experience.

It is hard enough to grasp one culture, much less to become an expert in many. This does not mean, however, that we can turn matters over to an elite corps of experts, and relax. We must all come to appreciate that many things valid for us are not necessarily adapted to the needs, or the minds, of others. While some nations want desperately some things which we have, other things we hold in highest regard they do not want at all. And it is the quintessence of naïveté to expect that peoples with histories radically different from ours will necessarily accept our political, social, economic and ethical values.

Indeed, our maturity in international affairs can be measured by the patience with which we tolerate preachments, however galling, on the virtues of "non-commitment" and the vices of "imperialism." In the United Nations and in other forums the spokesmen of various nations often affect a moral elevation, not to say superiority, that ill accords with some of their domestic behavior and their attitudes toward neighboring (particularly weaker) countries. A sense of humor and a remembrance of his-
tory will help. One can find many parallel statements by spokes-
men of the United States in the days of our weakness; our politi-
cians long delighted to “twist the Lion’s tail” and had warm popu-
lar support in so doing.

Factors of prime importance make programs of foreign aid in-
evitable and far outweigh the difficulties mentioned. None the less, the difficulties do indicate that expectations of rapid and
dramatic success will often prove unfounded. At best, setbacks are inevitable and must be accepted, if not with resignation, at
least philosophically.

It will not do to cry “failure” when we see the military, often
the only disciplined body of public servants existing in a new and
inexperienced country, purge corrupt men from office and attack
flagrant nepotism. Nor should we be astonished when opposition
leaders are thrust into jail, or tried and executed. Social change
that is both rapid and peaceful has been rare in history.

Attempts from the outside to prevent such upheavals are al-
most surely doomed to failure. Hoping to ward off catastrophic
violence, President Wilson adopted the principle that we would
not recognize new governments erected on the ruins of those over-
thrown by force. The policy was benevolent in intent but it was a failure; indeed, it did much to promote the principle of non-
intervention in its most extreme form. Benevolent purpose
proved no match for political realities. The reason is not far to
seek; static and inflexible societies tend to fracture under pres-
sure. Men who had lived in an inherited status no longer “knew
their place” when that status was reformed.

The phase of violence which social change almost inevitably
precipitates opens the way for extremists to attain influence. The
demagogue knows how to exploit those who have lost their social
and economic moorings. It requires the utmost subtlety and skill
to ride out this storm, and to promote democratic solutions rather
than dictatorship or oligarchy.

Land reform is one of the inevitable concomitants of the social
change we seek to stimulate. It is a convenient slogan, but not a
program. Every nation requires a different prescription, carefully
compounded to meet its own needs, and even highly developed
nations do not yet have an answer to their own problems, much
less a generalized answer for all. West Germany, for example, has
many small, uneconomic farms, cultivated by primitive means,
subsidized by the state. The United States also has acute un-
resolved problems of land utilization. If highly organized and vigorous economies have not found ways and means to meet their problems, an attempt from the outside to counsel or impose solutions in an underdeveloped country, bound tightly in tradition and without adequate political institutions, is vastly more difficult. Simple, "obvious" solutions may do more harm than good. Americans should remember the Civil War slogan "forty acres and a mule" as a cure for the after-effects of slavery. A man who is given the transient satisfactions of land ownership may thereafter suffer the ills of too small holdings and lack of capital for seed, fertilizer and machinery; he may be without the necessary training to be an independent operator and may have no ready market, or if one is available, may lack market experience.

In dispensing aid we must not be unduly shocked if corruption is a concomitant. The concept of public office as a public trust grows slowly, as our own record shows. When a relatively large amount of money is poured into a poverty-stricken country we would be naïve to expect that all of it will be wisely used. This is especially likely to occur where there is no corps of trained civil servants and no deeply rooted sense of public responsibility.

Necessary as aid is, the course to be steered between cooperation (the professed aim) and intervention (a hated word) is narrow and slippery in the extreme. The road can be negotiated, if at all, only if there is complete correspondence between profession and performance.

The great objective of the Alliance for Progress is to encourage the development of a continent where land and learning, opportunity and culture, property and power, are more widely and more fairly distributed. We hope to see formed the substance of democracy, not a sham façade for oligarchy or dictatorship. For that noble objective to be attained, social and economic reforms are required. In making reforms a *sine qua non* of aid, we often forget—it is never forgotten by the recipients—that the United States will judge their adequacy. The language of diplomacy should not conceal that this constitutes a form of intervention in the internal affairs of Latin America—beneficent in purpose, potentially useful in result, but intervention none the less.

This lays upon the United States two obligations. The first is to know the characteristics and needs of each country, not to lump them together as though the differences between them were not profound. That, alone, is an exacting requirement not as yet
met. The second is to maintain the integrity of the project, to use it for its stated purpose and for no other, however desirable it appears at the moment. This is not a counsel of perfection so much as a severely practical necessity. Strict fidelity to the announced principles of the Marshall Plan was a principal ingredient of its brilliant success. At the Punta del Este meeting of Foreign Ministers, unhappily, members of the United States delegation intimated that lack of strong resolutions as desired in Washington might have an adverse effect upon the size of the appropriations which Congress might grant. The hint, or threat, constituted a use of the program not for its declared purpose of assisting domestic reform but to spur adoption of an international position desired by the United States. This tended to impair the integrity of the program by making it an instrument in the cold war. Surely this was a failure to understand the psychology of essential partners in the enterprise.

The history of our attitude to alliances is instructive today. At the outset of our struggle for independence we eagerly sought help abroad. It was one of the triumphs of Benjamin Franklin's diplomacy that he exploited France's troubles with England to obtain a treaty of alliance with France in 1778, the declared purpose of which was thus expressed: "The essential and direct end of the present defensive alliance is to maintain effectually the liberty, sovereignty, and independence absolute and unlimited, of the said United States, as well in matters of government as of commerce." What a modern sound it has! That alliance was a vital factor in the success of the Revolution.

After the war, the interests of the United States diverged from those of France, which wanted to continue to use the United States as a pawn in its power game with England. Before the end of Washington's first Administration, Vice President John Adams wrote: "America has been long enough involved with wars of Europe. She has been a football between contending nations from the beginning, and it is easy to foresee that France and England will both endeavor to involve us in their future wars. It is our interest and duty to avoid them as much as possible, and to be completely independent, and to have nothing to do with either of them, but in commerce."

Our declaration of neutrality was issued the next year, and in
1796 came the classic statements in Washington’s Farewell Address: It is “unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her (Europe’s) politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities.” And again: “It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world . . . we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.”

Circumstances were such that no further alliances were made by the men who shaped our government under the Constitution. With the passage of time, key words in Washington’s statements were forgotten: he did not denounce all alliances, only permanent ones; he specifically endorsed temporary alliances. His qualifying expressions were overlooked; such subtleties were lost to memory. In the public mind all alliances became entangling.

The fact that we did not participate in other alliances kept us from appreciating that our unhappy experience with France after the immediate objective had been attained was more nearly normal than unusual. We never appreciated how brittle alliances have customarily been, how frequently nations have changed partners even in the midst of critical times.

The century and more of a hardening mood against any alliance under any circumstances whatever deprived the United States of an important element of flexibility in policy. The rigidity went so far that during the First World War Woodrow Wilson would not so much as use the word “ally” colloquially; he insisted upon referring to our “associates.” Franklin Roosevelt spoke of alliances colloquially, but signed no treaties. In retrospect it seems almost incredible that because of the hard mold in which our mental processes had become fixed we should have failed to make terms for our participation in two world wars.

Since we lacked experience with alliances and had failed to learn at first hand what they could and could not do, we were in difficulties also when policy was reversed and alliances were made during President Truman’s Administration. There then tended to be a complete reversal of mood also. Just as alliances had long seemed synonymous with evil, they now were identified with good; as before there had been extravagant fears of entanglement, there now were extravagant hopes of cooperation.

There is urgent need for fresh and perceptive analysis of what can reasonably be expected of alliances and what cannot. They arise less often from a real cohesion of common interests among
nations fairly equal in power than from a common danger. Nearly all alliances are proclaimed as defensive; the most successful are usually those which are in fact defensive in the face of real and pressing dangers.

Alliances should not be sentimentalized. Washington's warnings against "permanent, inveterate antipathies" and "passionate attachment of one nation for another" are still valid. Our postwar relationships with Germany and Japan illustrate our ability to resist a temptation to permanent antipathies. We must not expect permanent attachments either; even our "special relationship" with Britain must never be taken for granted. Our war and postwar contacts with Russia never did involve a passionate attachment, but we must now beware of the permanent antipathy described by Washington lest it some day prevent us from taking advantage of possible, however unforeseen, changes in the Soviet character or position.

Alliances are sometimes called "marriages of convenience," but that is too sweeping a metaphor. They are better considered as limited partnerships for specific purposes for a relatively short time—as short as the attainment of the specific objective permits. The reason for this can be simply stated, though to operate within the limitations set may well be infinitely complicated. All significant international intercourse involves some surrender of freedom of action, and it is inevitably greater in the case of an alliance; for the outcome is shaped not only by what we do but also by what the other participant does. Though we act with the wisdom of serpents, if the other acts foolishly the consequence may be as disastrous for us as though we had been foolish too.

The difficulties and risks are compounded when responsibility is shared not merely bilaterally but multilaterally; then one nation, acting wrongheadedly or without adequate skill, may wreck the efforts of all the others. And the chances of error resulting in failure are multiplied not arithmetically but geometrically when responsibility is shared not over one but over several areas of interest. One power can wreck many aspects of the work of several nations. Moreover, the likelihood of internal strains within the alliance also advances geometrically. Even two nations never have a uniformity of interest. Thus despite our close connection with Britain, British views with regard to Red China (to take a single example) contrast sharply with ours. In a group alliance, the tensions among conflicting interests, real or imagined, mount
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rapidly. Not only the substance of policy, but the manner of approach grows in complexity. There is always danger that some nation's ideas will not be heard with enough attention to avoid wounding its *amour propre*. This difficulty is compounded when the alliance is between states of markedly unequal size and resources—the usual situation. The less powerful are acutely conscious that wisdom is not distributed in direct proportion to power. Successful participation in a multiple alliance thus requires self-discipline and patience beyond that demanded in ordinary international intercourse.

These considerations do not constitute an argument against alliances but they do suggest the unwisdom of extending alliances to more nations than is absolutely necessary. They also constitute an argument against the feeling that the way to strengthen an existing alliance is to load it with new and different functions. When an alliance has fulfilled its basic mission and rough relationships have been smoothed, there may be reason for adding to its responsibilities. But when objectives are still beyond present attainment and internal strains are evident it is not the best time to add new and more complex obligations.

VI

Many of these same considerations apply to our participation in international organizations. In the public mind, international organizations were long equated with alliances. The United States was a prime mover in the establishment of an international court, then abstained from participation in it for many years and finally joined with a reservation that made our commitment highly equivocal. The United States demanded and helped to shape the League of Nations, and then declined to participate; the halls of Congress rang with the word entanglement. We thereby lost the experience in international organization that participation in the League would have supplied. As a non-participant we found it easy to hold others responsible for the League's failure.

Lacking experience, we supposed that the United Nations would do better with our participation and under our leadership. Have not the events of the last 15 years shown that we entered it with higher expectations than could reasonably be fulfilled? In retrospect, it is painfully clear that a key premise was false: the structure of the organization rested upon a presumption of continued unity among the five great powers that had led the victo-
rious coalition. Tensions during the war should have alerted us to the fragility of that hope.

As long as there was, in effect, an automatic majority for the Western position the difficulties arising from the failure of the great powers to cooperate were serious, but no more. With the admission of over 50 new nations (and more coming), many of them totally inexperienced, and with the growth of the attitude of non-commitment in all its various shades of definition, the complexities involved in utilizing the United Nations as a major instrument of policy begin to emerge. Already we have hedged by setting up organizations related to the United Nations but not immediately under it. It is now plain that our participation in this international forum calls for more perception and delicacy than we realized at the start, or even five years ago.

We encouraged another type of international organization without becoming affiliated; the Coal and Steel Community and the Common Market are two illustrations. After the war the economies of Europe were in physical ruin or in a state of demoralization. The Marshall Plan gave a great thrust to their recovery. As part of our effort to get Europe on its feet, the United States pressed for the reduction of barriers to international trade and the development of larger tariff-free markets. The Common Market advanced both aims. Today the rate of economic growth in Western Europe exceeds that of the United States and Britain. Whereas for years the world complained of a dollar gap, we now find the two principal trading currencies of the world—the dollar and the pound—under severe pressure. There is now a dollar deficiency, and it is possible that competition from the Common Market countries may well make the cure of this situation more difficult. The trading patterns of the world are shifting dramatically; old habits and ideas are no longer "conservative"; many are simply irrelevant.

The need for deeper understanding in this matter is great. The traditional way out of exchange difficulties is to resort to protectionism in one of its many forms. That was our approach in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the world of tomorrow such a course might give momentary relief to a few industries but would surely bring ultimate disaster. We have promoted the new organizations; they have thus far done better than all expectation; we must now find ways to work with them either as an active partner or an effective competitor. The British have elected
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to apply for admission to the Common Market as the least troublesome among several alternatives, all of them filled with difficulty. At the moment such a course of action is probably not appropriate for us. But tomorrow will require new policies, and it may be that radical actions will be the most genuinely conservative by preserving key values in drastically changed circumstances.

VII

The thesis that in our days policy in action must be increasingly subtle and sophisticated could have been illustrated in many ways beside the six selected. No matter how many were used, however, all would emphasize the central reality that subtlety and sophistication are human traits, not governed by the dramatic developments in the physical world. Startling changes in our temporal environment do dramatize the necessity for more profound learning, keener perception, heightened sensitivity and all the other ingredients of sophistication. But they likewise demonstrate that there has been no break in the continuity of history, of human experience.

No good purpose is served by fostering the illusion that we live in a “new age.” Distinctive eras are identified and get their accepted names long after they are past, seldom or never from contemporaries. At best the concept of an age remains imprecise, and even when historians reach some agreement upon a name—say the Renaissance—the dates assigned by different scholars to its onset and its passing will vary a century or more at either end. Even when it has been named there will still be dispute as to which of its characteristics are the essential ones.

We must be on our guard, too, against seeing incidents, however catastrophic, as “decisive,” against assigning permanent significance to events which are momentarily prominent but when seen in perspective are found to have been transient in effect. On one occasion Disraeli exclaimed: “Not a principle in the management of our foreign affairs, accepted by all statesmen for guidance up to six months ago, exists. . . . You have a new world. . . . The balance of power has been entirely destroyed.” Today, only a professional historian would know what Disraeli was talking about, and he would also know that Disraeli was wrong. Disraeli had let a catastrophic event warp his judgment. This tendency to exaggerate the importance of current events is characteristic
of all eras, but it is heightened in ours by the speed and dramatic impact provided by modern communications. "This, too, will pass away" is an ancient saying, but as true and as relevant as ever.

For humans who wrestle with events in the attempt to shape their own destiny any form of determinism should be incredible. It is also the deadly enemy of our political philosophy. The drives that activate men are fundamental and continuous, but their direction and intensity vary not only from age to age, but from moment to moment and from man to man. That is why we no longer hear the deterministic slogan "manifest destiny," though it was long a popular fetish; that is why Hitler's inevitable "wave of the future" is broken. Khrushchev appeals to "scientific history"—itself a contradiction in terms—as proof of the ultimate triumph of Communism. If it triumphs it will not be because it is "inevitable" but because our policy in action lacks subtlety and sophistication.

It may have been noticed that thus far no mention has been made of power in a time when the phrase "power politics" has become fashionable once again. Indeed, there is a plain inference in much current discussion that power is the principal ingredient in international affairs. Power obviously has its place, and in some phases of policy—such as dealing between equals—it is a major factor. But there are few equals among the nations of the world, and paradoxically our time is marked more by the baiting and bullying of the strong by the weak than by the control of small powers by the great ones. In the Russian orbit, of course, naked force is often used to maintain ascendancy, as witness Hungary and East Germany. But in the rest of the world the mere possession of power tends to put those who possess it on the defensive. It is not a lack of power on the part of the colonial powers that is precipitating the liquidation of their empires, but forces essentially quite different. In our own case, we find our relationship with the states of Latin America made infinitely more complicated because the disparity in physical power between them and us is so conspicuous. The giant of the north is feared just because it is so powerful, and fear easily slides into distrust and dislike.

In our day, as I have tried to show, all the elements entering into successful international policy and action require a more sophisticated understanding than ever before. For those who possess power, the manner in which they use it is perhaps the element requiring subtlety in the highest degree.