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Sampler of Haig's Views On Foreign Policy Issues

Soviet Arms Buildup

In a few years we Americans must, indeed, we will, one way or another, — make a decision as to whether or not we will continue to seek a world order hospitable to the Christian-Judeo values and interests of today or to abrogate that order to values and interests distinctly different from our own.

I have described the Soviet threat as relentless. That is a very considered term. It means what we are witnessing is not the consequence of some precipitous change in mood in Moscow which has suddenly allocated greater resources to the defense sector; hardly at all. What we are observing is the maturing consequences of 15 years of increased spending on the part of the Soviet leadership at the rate of 4 to 5 percent, increased each year — each year — every year, for the past 15 years.

Now finally this growth in Soviet power has changed the nature of the

threat itself. Some years ago, we as Americans could afford preoccupation with forced balances in the central region of NATO Europe, which guarded the gateway to the heart of Europe. Today, as Soviet power has grown, as Soviet mobility has been achieved, as the Soviet fleet has acquired a seven-seas capability, that threat has changed from continental and Eurasian to global in character. Therefore, rather than just a concern to military thinking, the Soviet threat has now become a threat to the very nexus of Western vitality — political, economic and military. Clearly, the task ahead for this vital decade before us will be the management of global Soviet power.

*Speech before
Republican Convention,
Detroit, July, 6, 1980*

Requirements of U.S. Policy

You know, some years ago America, together with our allies in Europe, adopted a twin pillar of policy: détente, on the one hand, efforts to improve East-West relations, and the maintenance of our necessary security policy on the other. As I assess the success or failure of those twin-pillared programs, as we have witnessed over the past years direct proxy intervention by the Soviet Union with Cuban proxies in Angola, Ethiopia and Southern Yemen, efforts to overturn the status quo in northern Yemen, the creation two years ago of a puppet state in Afghanistan upsetting 100 years of crypto-neutrality, the overrunning of Cambodia by North Vietnamese proxies of the Soviet Union and the recent unprece-

dentented direct intervention of Soviet forces again in Afghanistan, we must ask ourselves: have these twin pillars of policy and the way they have been applied in recent years served the American people and the interests of the free world? My answer is a categorical no.

So I remain convinced tonight that America must replace these twin pillars of policy with a new twin pillar of policy involving reciprocity and strength. Now the development and acceptance of such a new policy for the Western world will require a new leadership in Washington.

*Republican Convention
speech*

International Trends

The growing resource power of the third world reflects the broader trend of a diffusion of power, indeed, a transformation in the post-World War II international environment. While international power was never defined solely in military terms, there was usually a close link between the military and economic components of national power. This axiom is no longer accurate. Japan's economic strength, for example, makes it a major determinant of international economic developments, yet it remains relatively weak militarily. The oil reserves of Saudi Arabia provide it with a leverage in Middle Eastern politics and international economic affairs in stark con-

trast to its minimal military power or any other recognized measure of national strength.

Changes in the central strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union underline the growing significance of regional nuclear and conventional balances. Soviet opportunities for global interventionism will increase; NATO's capability to deter such action will decrease. The political consequences of this development may be the most far-reaching of the coming decade.

*Washington Quarterly magazine,
winter 1980*

The Western Alliance

NATO will shortly find itself in an unprecedented predicament. After decades of virtually absolute security beneath the American nuclear umbrella, the members of this alliance will soon find themselves inferior to the Warsaw Pact in many crucial areas of military power. NATO will have to find the will and the resources to limit the duration of this perilous inferiority. It will eventually have to be overcome, but the effort required will subject the alliance to intense strains, and extraordinary American leadership will be needed to establish an acceptable balance in the 1980's.

However, many Europeans evidently fear that the United States is no longer willing or able to exert the leadership

they have come to expect. This means that the style of American leadership must be less pedantic and paternalistic and more sensitive to the emerging concerns of other alliance members.

In the future, American leadership in NATO must be pragmatic, active, collective and reciprocal. It is for the United States, as the leader of the industrial democracies, to identify those actions that can be taken to improve the posture of the alliance both politically and militarily. Free of bullying insensitivity, Washington must inspire, persuade, urge and cajole other NATO nations to make the decisions that will be neither straightforward nor easy.

*Washington Quarterly magazine,
winter 1980*

The Role of the Cabinet

The President's best use of his Cabinet is something that cannot be determined by immutable rules. Nonetheless, experience teaches a few things about the necessary balance in this sphere of Presidential activity. A President cannot squander time on minutiae; Cabinet members must be responsible for managing their respective departments, for which they need a delegation of requisite authority or the right kind of Presidential support and backing.

On policy matters affecting the responsibilities or interests of more than one Cabinet department, the President should compel every Cabinet officer to make policy recommendations to the

President in front of, and open to challenge by, other Cabinet officers. Here, however, the consideration of balance again comes into play; every Cabinet officer must have periodic private access to the President; otherwise that officer's morale, prestige and hence effectiveness will be gravely undermined.

When Presidential decisions are taken, Cabinet members must know and understand those decisions. This may sound so self-evident as to be trivial, but I know from experience and first-hand observation that it is not.

*Washington Quarterly,
autumn 1980*

Congress and Foreign Policy

The swinging pendulum of primacy between the White House and Capitol Hill (which includes the Supreme Court) is the dialectic of American Constitutional history.

This pendulum has now taken a long swing toward Capitol Hill. Through a variety of legislative mechanisms, it has sought and secured a much greater measure of detailed control over executive branch agencies. This process was furthered by an historical coincidence:

the movement of many former members of the executive branch into congressional staffs, giving the Congress unprecedented expertise in executive branch activity.

In foreign affairs, where such attributes as coherence, consistency and dispatch are of great value, the consequences have been dismaying, to say the least.

*Washington Quarterly,
autumn 1980*

Dealing With the Bureaucracy

The best way to sustain professional motivation and morale is to use the bureaucracy and draw on its talents, skills and experience. Because of their dedication, the career professionals can have no better incentive than a sense of real participation in the work of government. A wise administration will leave to the professionals — under appropriate policy-level supervision — the tasks they are best qualified to undertake.

Regardless of the short-run benefits a given administration might derive, few things could be more deleterious to the long-term interests of our nation than a politicization of our professional military and civilian career services. Promotions will signal to the professionals whether candor and objectivity

are rewarded or whether amiability and flexibility are more desirable. In the context of senior career assignments and promotions, knowledge, skills and a proven performance should never take second place to political contacts or party affiliation.

The White House staff exists to support and advise the President in making his own decisions and to monitor the executive branch's execution of those decisions. The staff does not exist to become an independent center of line authority or power in competition with the Cabinet or other executive branch components. When it does so, or is allowed to try, serious trouble ensues.

*Washington Quarterly,
autumn 1980*

DEC 18 1980 BS Washington.

AMERICANS have always cherished a hardy insistence that American institutions were equal to any task, no matter the challenge. Over the past decade, however, serious questions have been raised about the adequacy of our institutions to deal with the problems besetting us. . . .

As we struggle with an apparently seamless web of foreign and domestic entanglements, American confidence in major institutions has shown an alarming decline. This is particularly devastating in the case of the presidency. Some observers are suggesting that the institution itself needs major reform. Others are persuaded that a different personality is required for the job; a more muscular president could transform the situation. Still others find the flaw to be in the recent incumbents, who are derided for lacking confidence or suffering from a weak will.

It is my thesis that the presidency, properly understood, is still a vital and effective institution. The muscular personality would not be the source

By Alexander M. Haig

of its strength; any man capable of winning an American presidential election cannot be described as weak-willed or unsure of himself. However, what has been missing is the notion of a balanced presidency.

The Constitution of the United States is an open invitation to struggle, with an intricate system of checks and balances designed to keep our government from ever becoming monolithic. But the Eighteenth Century concept of balance is as essential to our Constitution as is its emphasis on checks. The machinery of government becomes harmonious not in paralysis but in balanced action.

The presidency is our system's essential balance wheel. The president is the hub of this wheel, and the spokes connect him to an extraordinary range of relationships. But the lack of proper balance in several of the president's most important relationships is the root of the institution's recent troubles. . . .

Intrinsic to our system is the right of the citizen to demand redress of his grievances—to demand answers to the problems besetting him. But the presidential response is unique, for the president's task is not simply to broker such demands but also to articulate the interests of the entire nation. Both aspects of the dialogue have fallen badly out of sync in recent years.

The vocation of political lobbyist (foreseen by the Founding Fathers) has become ever more popular. Over 2,200 entities are now registered for such activities as the traditional organizations advocating business, labor, agricultural, or other interests have been joined by a steadily increasing number of single issue groups. . . .

Our president must be cognizant of our nation's often conflicting currents of interest, desires, and opinions; but it likewise is the president's task to lead public opinion, to mold it, and to shape a national consensus on issues of major importance. Often this will require him to take positions or actions that are temporarily unpopular, even stridently opposed by many. But as Winston Churchill observed, a politician with his ear always to the ground assumes a very vulnerable posture. . . .

Given the idealistic, even utopian, strains that permeate American thought and our instinctively optimistic national approach to problems, telling the truth to the American people is no easy task. But no president can provide the leadership America and its allies desperately need unless he understands the stark, often unpalatable, realities that

Telling the Truth to Americans Is No Easy Task

In which the nominee for secretary of state explains how he believes honesty to be a better policy for a president (or a cabinet member) than pandering to "less than totally informed opinions."

shape our domestic and international life. He must be willing and able to explain them and their consequences convincingly to the American people and to the world.

Unfortunately. . . both presidents and presidential aspirants have become mesmerized by polls. Rather than showing the lonely courage of an Abraham Lincoln or taking full advantage of the bully pulpit, presidents now hire public relations specialists and advertising executives in the apparent belief that marketing techniques and gimmicks are adequate substitutes for sound, coherent policies. . . .

Our forefathers created a republic. They believed—with Edmund Burke—that an elected political leader owed those who put him in office his wisdom and judgment, not just deference to their often changing and less than totally informed opinions of the moment. . . .

The indispensable partner of any American president is the Congress. The success or failure of any president is usually shaped by the success or failure of that partnership. This alliance is seldom totally harmonious, often uneasy, and sometimes marked by open or thinly-veiled hostility. Readily, often gleefully, our government's various branches have accepted the Constitution's open invitation to struggle. The swinging pendulum of primacy between the White House and Capitol Hill (which includes the Supreme Court) is the dialectic of American constitutional history.

The parties most directly involved have seldom agreed on the rightness of the balance struck at any given moment. Senator Harry Truman felt differently from President Truman, who once remarked, "I've always said that a president who didn't have a fight with Congress wasn't any good anyhow"—a view also held, if differently expressed, by all presidents who came to the Oval Office from Capitol Hill, including John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford.

In the wake of Vietnam, Watergate, and what were widely perceived as the dangers of an "Imperial Presidency," this pendulum has now taken a long swing toward Capitol Hill. Congress has become far more assertive, particularly in the area of foreign policy, than it was even a few years ago. . . .

[This] neo-congressional government would not be harmful if we had a parliamentary system. But our Congress is neither temperamentally nor structurally adapted to discharge executive branch responsibilities, nor is it constitutionally mandated to do so. . . .

The ability of Congress to discharge its responsibilities efficiently and authoritatively while acquiring a growing influence over the executive branch had been damaged by such developments. In foreign affairs, where such attributes as coherence,

consistency, and dispatch are of great value, the consequences have been dismaying, to say the least. America's cherished and hard-won consensus on our basic interests abroad, a casualty of the Vietnam period, has not been recovered. Executive authority in dealing with other countries is diminished inevitably by the knowledge that our main lines of policy, our alliances, and our reputation for fidelity may be at the mercy of a constant struggle to establish a fleeting consensus.

One overlooked aspect of the difficulties of reestablishing consensus is to be found in the congressional staff system itself. The demoralization of the executive bureaucracy has contributed to a new phenomenon. Aggrieved or disappointed professionals move from the executive departments (State, the Pentagon, the NSC, and the White House) into congressional staff positions. Deprived of meaningful participation in policymaking in their former posts, they seek it through Congress itself. Hence, when administrations change, the new president will find himself with a bureaucracy at war with itself

If he is to succeed, a president must learn how to deal effectively with the Congress. . . . Despite the example of Harry Truman, a president who campaigns against Congress as an institution is unlikely to forge a constructive partnership with its members. This does not mean that a president who is forceful in dealing with Congress is not more likely to have good relations with the Congress than one who projects an image of weakness. . . . A president who takes the lead in forging a national consensus on complex, controversial issues and forcefully takes a firm stand on them will not only be respected in the Congress; his position is likely to be privately applauded and greeted with considerable private relief—and appreciation—by many individual congressmen. . . .

The basic criteria of selection [of cabinet members] should be excellence and competence. . . . One hallmark of a true leader is a willingness to pick, and effectively use, outstandingly able subordinates. A fear of being overshadowed is an almost certain indicator of inner weakness and insecurity. Harry Truman's formal education was limited, and he never expected to have the presidency thrust upon him, but he rose impressively to its challenge. Two things that enabled him to do so were his willingness to have people like George Marshall, Dean Acheson, and James Forrestal in his cabinet, and his ability to harness their talents effectively without any of them—or the country—ever forgetting who was president. A president willing and able to relieve General MacArthur for insubordination would not have allowed his administration, or the country, to be embarrassed by an ambassador to the United Nations. . . .

If well chosen, cabinet officers will be strong personalities with independent minds and views—and often, independent constituencies. To be effective, however, our government must speak with a coherent, reasonably consistent voice. The balance to be struck here is difficult and tenuous, subject to continual adjustments dictated by circumstances. Each cabinet officer must have enough free rein to run his or her department effectively and to exhibit the independence of spirit and judgment that is of such great value to the president. Nonetheless, the cabinet as a whole must pull together as a team toward the administration and party goals that, in the final analysis, the president must define and over which he must be the final arbiter. . . .

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