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There's a 'Reagan Doctrine' Awaiting Only His Imprimatur

Running ahead of Walter Mondale by 20 points or more, and with the Soviet Union suddenly willing to talk to him, President Reagan doesn't need any political advice from me, but I have some anyway.

If Mr. Reagan is trying just to win this election, perhaps he is going about it in the right way—playing safe, waving the flag and saying nothing more interesting and challenging than that the sunshine is very merry.

However, if he intends to try for a mandate—the kind of substantial victory that

Viewpoint

by Morton M. Kondracke

means something programmatically and carries in a Congress that will support him—then the president has got to start talking about what he intends to do during the next four years.

This article is mainly about what he might say on foreign policy, but the president also ought to come out with an outline of the budget and the tax-reform plan he intends to submit next year if reelected.

If he wants a line-item veto, he ought to tell us which budget lines he wants to use it on. If he wants a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution, he ought to say first how he'd get the budget balanced.

Republicans have been merrily bashing at Walter Mondale for wanting to raise taxes, but at least we know where Mr. Mondale is coming from. Where is Mr. Reagan going?

As to foreign policy, what we need, frankly, is a Reagan Doctrine—a definition of what his administration hopes to accomplish in the world, and how.

Mr. Reagan says he wants arms reductions. Let him tell us how he proposes to get them. And he says he does not intend to use U.S. troops in Central America, but we need to know how it's possible to stop the spread of communism without them.

For advice on a Reagan Doctrine speech, the president might well consult his United Nations ambassador, Jeane Kirkpatrick, who has been thinking about the subject. She says she might write a book about it when she goes back to academia, but the nation would be better off if the president appropriated her ideas first.

The essence of this proposed doctrine is that the U.S. should be willing to use all its power short of direct U.S. military inter-

vention in order to make such interventions unnecessary.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick would not publicly rule out the use of force—she believes in the deterrent value of never saying "never." But she wants Americans and people in other countries to stop expecting—some fearing, others hoping—that the U.S. will take responsibility for solving everyone's security problems.

In an interview the other day, she said she thinks it is misleading for people to think that this is a bipolar world divided between two symmetrical "superpowers."

"This conception," she said, "encourages other countries to imagine that if they are the target of insurgent forces sponsored by the Soviet Union, it's our responsibility to respond, as opposed to they themselves.

"The concept can lead other countries to escapist thinking about their own problems."

The proper way to think about the Soviets, she says, is as an empire that devotes all the resources of itself and its subject peoples to the task of expanding the empire. In a recent speech, she said: "We have seen this process so often, watched its success so often, that anyone who is interested can understand their methods if they choose: cultivation of insurgency, provocation of repression, denial of complicity, suggestion always that their own violence is purely internal in its origin, merciless criticism of the victim, a concerted attack on anyone who seeks to aid the victim, Soviet weapons, Libyan planes, Cuban advisers, Palestinian international terrorists, dead civilians, disrupted economies, disinformation and intimidation."

The U.S. is "not an empire locked in a death struggle with them. We are not two scorpions in a bottle," she said in the interview. The key difference is that the U.S. has allies that decide voluntarily whether they want us to cooperate with them.

Some of these allies, and also some American officials, she said, believe it's America's responsibility to dominate the alliances and friendship pacts of which we're a part.

"That's out of date and inappropriate," she said. "Strategic cooperation should mean just that—that we're willing to help, but not dominate.

"Anytime we seem to dominate the response to aggression in any region, we demoralize our allies and confuse the situation. It's their freedom and independence that's at stake. It's their problem and we should not make it our problem in the ultimate sense."

She said that not only may American allies become overly dependent on the U.S., but some adversaries already think they see an opportunity to take advantage

of a U.S. strategy of global interventionism.

She cited the example of Libya's Muammar Qadhafi, who declared in a speech March 2 marking the seventh anniversary of his revolution: "We must force America to fight on 100 fronts all over the earth . . . in Lebanon, in Chad, in Sudan, in El Salvador. . . . We must wage a people's war of liberation which America cannot face up to, and thus make the United States realize that it is proceeding along a road harmful to America itself so that reason will return to its maniac power."

According to Mrs. Kirkpatrick, "it's perfectly correct for Qadhafi to believe it would lead to our destruction if we tried to fight on 100 fronts. It would. That's not a practical strategy for us. It's not desirable or thinkable."

So, she said, the U.S. should help countries that are targets of Soviet Bloc aggression—with political support, economic and trade assistance, military aid, sales and training, and covert action.

"There's a misconception in this country about the nature of power," she said. "There's a tendency to confuse power with force, which is only one form of power.

"It's the widespread liberal view that if we dare to use power, we'll end up in war, that it's a slippery slope.

"I'm bothered by the fact that the Democrats in Congress who are most alarmist about Ronald Reagan leading the nation to war are also against adequate economic assistance to Central America."

She said that because of its proximity to the U.S., Central America "is the one area where if we permit the Soviets to establish military bases, we would be most likely to become involved in conflict. But that will happen only if we don't do the things we should do.

"But the things we should do are not to commit American combat troops. I don't think that's necessary or desirable."

Mrs. Kirkpatrick says that all of this is not any "Kirkpatrick Doctrine," but is in fact Reagan administration policy. If so, it would reassure a lot of people to have Mr. Reagan articulate it.

Mr. Kondracke is executive editor of The New Republic.