

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 26

WALL STREET JOURNAL  
20 December 1984

# Democrats Ponder Their Party's Future

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## Solarz

Democrats need to frame an approach that will appeal to the great majority of middle-class voters while remaining faithful to our historic commitments to economic opportunity and social justice for all. We must demonstrate that compassion for those in need is not incompatible with efforts to root out waste and ineffectiveness in programs to benefit the needy. We must articulate a vision of the nation's future clearly based on a conception of the national interest rather than a collection of special interests.

The tendency in the developing debate will be to concentrate on those domestic issues that most concern the American people. But it would be a serious mistake if Democrats failed to reconsider their position on foreign policy as well—given the increasing impact of events abroad on U.S. security and well-being.

Here Democrats should adopt a dual posture of patriotic support and principled opposition—backing the administration where it is right, and opposing it where it is wrong.

Democrats should make it clear, for example, that Republicans have no monopoly on programs designed to strengthen America and contain the Soviet Union. Genuine bipartisanship already exists and should continue in relations with Israel, NATO, Japan and China.

Such harmony is in the national interest and should be encouraged whenever possible. Yet the Democratic Party can profit politically by making it clear that it stands

for alternative policies on a variety of important international issues.

- In the area of arms control, for example, Democrats should welcome the possible resumption of negotiations yet warn that the president's Strategic Defense Initiative and his opposition to a ban on anti-satellite weapons will result in the waste of untold billions of dollars and rule out any future agreements.

In terms of human rights, Democrats should oppose tyrannies of the left, such as those in Afghanistan, Poland and Vietnam, as well as repression on the right, as in Chile, Pakistan and Paraguay. We thereby distinguish our position from that of the Reagan administration, which has concentrated its criticism primarily against Communist countries.

- Concerning Central America, Democrats should actively support the Contadora process, which remains the last best hope for peace in the region, while strongly opposing the administration's counterproductive covert campaign to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

- In dealing with the Philippines, Democrats should make it clear that the best way to prevent the eventual victory of the Communist-dominated New People's Army is through an active U.S. effort to bring about a restoration of democracy and essential economic reforms.

- Regarding South Africa, Democrats should reject the Reagan policy of "constructive engagement," which has clearly failed to facilitate any real progress toward the enfranchisement of the black majority. We should call instead for a policy of "constructive engagement" in which we apply economic and diplomatic pressure against Pretoria to abolish the apartheid system.

Foreign policy can be one of the Democratic Party's future strong suits. A stance of selective opposition vis-a-vis the administration—support when merited and criticism when deserved—will demonstrate that Democrats have the vision and capacity to protect the nation's interests while promoting its ideals.

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