THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW
25 Feb 1973

Caesar-serving professors and theorizing politicians

The Conduct and Misconduct Of Foreign Affairs

Reflection on U.S. Foreign Policy Since World War II.
By Charles Yost.
226 pp. New York: Random House. $7.95.

The Crippled Giant

American Foreign Policy and its Domestic Consequences.
By Senator J. William Fulbright.
292 pp. New York: Random House. $6.95.

Hammarskjold

By Brian Urquhart.
521 pp. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $12.50.

The Reform of Power

A Proposal for An International Security System.
By Leonard Beaton.
242 pp. New York: The Viking Press. $7.95.

By DAVID P. CALLEO

Formerly, Ambassadors and Senators wrote memoirs and professors wrote theories of international relations. Today, professors often serve Caesar, while diplomats and politicians become theoreticians of power.

The arrangement is not without advantage for the study of international affairs, as two recent books suggest. Ambassador Charles W. Yost and Senator J. William Fulbright have each published highly readable studies, strongly criticizing American postwar foreign policy and seeking to expose the malignant political ideals and structures responsible.

Mr. Yost finished his distinguished diplomatic career by serving as our Ambassador at the United Nations. While he speaks with the perspective and authority of an inside professional, his views are neither official nor complacent. Admiring Acheson, he nevertheless believes our postwar reactions to Russia excessive and wonders if a Republican victory in 1948 would not have been preferable. As it was, he says, Stalin and McCarthy almost seem to have been the architects of American foreign policy. The long years of cold war militarized our political system and consolidated a dangerously bloated defense and foreign policy apparatus. Recent years, he believes, have brought little improvement. Each of the last three Presidents has unfortunately felt gifted in foreign affairs. Our foreign policy has not only made serious mistakes thereby, but grown dangerously personal, secretive and irresponsible. Yost would drastically reduce the National Security Council and the C.I.A., banish the military from diplomacy, and center foreign policy around the Secretary of State. The professional foreign service would take the leading role for which Yost believes it alone is properly trained. Congress, if it ever put its own house in order, could reassert its constitutional functions.

More people are likely to agree with Mr. Yost's criticism of the substance and apparatus of our foreign policy than to believe that more power to the career foreign service would bring decisive improvement. Diplomatic professionals have generally been as mesmerized by the cold war as amateurs. Somewhat surprisingly, Mr. Yost points to economic institutions like the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and the I.M.F. (International Monetary Fund) as models for the successful conduct of policy by professionals. But close perusal of our foreign economic policy, where the next cold war has been taking shape for 10 years, scarcely supports the view that all the troubles began with Governor Connally.

Senator Fulbright, who shares many of Mr. Yost's alarms, assigns the blame more convincingly: "Power is a narcotic, a potent intoxicant, and America has been on a 'trip.'" If anything, it is the unprofessional chaos of our Government which has saved us from a worse fate.

Mr. Yost carries his faith in organizational and apolitical solutions to a passionate plea for world government. The modern world, he says, is moving too fast for the nation state. It is hard not to see Yost's kind of internationalism as political science fiction. The frustrating exigencies of curbing power within a real nation are to be escaped by leaping to some putative international utopia. Thus many in Europe have hoped to escape their intractable national problems by becoming good Europeans. But as Europe's evolution suggests, nations usually need to come to terms with themselves before they can come to terms with their neighbors. American reformers would do well to complain less about the abstract evils of "nationalism" in general, and keep their minds on the aggressiveness of American foreign policy in particular.

Senator Fulbright should offer considerable reassurance to those who fear that humanism and measure are vanishing from American politics. The book surveys American policy in Asia, the Middle East and Europe and then focuses on the domestic costs and dangers to American democracy from our permanent "low-grade crisis" over foreign affairs. According to Fulbright, Americans, going against the grain, have become a fearful and ungenerous people. Lulled by executive glamour, or the pseudo-scientific hocus-pocus of geopolitical experts, the public is too ready to sacrifice democratic restraints in specious emergencies. We need to regain our mistrust of power, our respect for law and parliamentary deliberation. Beyond, we need to restore a humane vision for the future to replace the technocratic, depersonalized abstraction so fashionable among experts and so repulsive to their students. Before we are likely to end the material poverty of the few, Fulbright believes, we will have to alleviate the spiritual poverty of the many.

Fulbright, too, hopes for a revival of the United Nations, although his enthusiasm is more circumscribed. By symbolizing the community of nations, the U.N. can perhaps externalize and reinforce the inner checks on undisciplined competitiveness, necessary if powerful nations are not to destroy themselves. If the U.N. has not yet had much success, Fulbright agrees, America, whose global meddling has unilaterally usurped the peacekeeping function, bears much of the blame. Fulbright hopes that Nixon and Kissinger are at least turning American policy away from universal interventionism toward a more rational calculation of national interests. But the Senator hopes we might go beyond the amoral sterilities of traditional power politics and return to the Wilsonian notion of an organized common peace. For him, the Middle East presents a promising opportunity for a world concert to impose a solution. Fulbright sees a fundamental difference between intervention by one nation's arrogating the right to impose solutions on others, and intervention by the United Nations, acting as representative of the world community and operating through powers granted by treaty for the common good.

Brian Urquhart's admirable political biography, "Hammarskjold," provides lavish insight ino the possibilities of international organizations for peacekeeping. The author, himself a senior international civil servant, and clearly sympathetic to his subject, presents a complex story without jumping to hasty and sweeping generalizations. Hammarskjold came to office in 1953, searching for a new consensus to liberate the U.N. from the cold war. Even within a world order based on the sovereign equality of

continued

David P. Calleo is professor of European studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.