

SAGEBRUSH DIPLOMACY

By JOHN A. SCHUTZ

AMATEURS direct our foreign policy. Ever since Jackson's administration, when the political virtues of the common man were first tested, the unprofessional conduct of our foreign policy has served to bewilder and alarm the nation. New declarations of policy, startling disclosures of information, inept decisions make the history of our international policy uneven and have caused people to query whether we actually have a foreign policy. The rocky road since 1919 leaves much doubt.

The structure of the United States government for determining foreign policy is partly responsible for our curious approach. By law the president and the Senate determine the enforcement of American policy. The president negotiates; the Senate approves. As a watchdog of constitutional liberties the Senate's role has been cautious and relations with the president usually are strained.

The president has traditionally set the nation's policy—an unwritten prerogative derived from his power to send and receive envoys and negotiate with other nations. His extensive files of information, his supervision of our envoys, and his command of the military forces make possible some concentration of attention and give some continuity to our policy. But his dependence upon the Senate complicates his tasks. Its rapid turn-over of men on the foreign affairs committee, its suspicion of the executive, and its desire to increase its prestige usually cause trouble. The president must compromise, tone his treaties to senatorial sentiments, and be attentive to party politics rather than form his treaties solely for the good of the nation. President Washington wanted harmony with the Senate and tried to work with it. The Senate debated his proposed treaty, quibbled over definitions, and amended it so unmercifully *that when Washington left the Senate Chamber, he said that he would be damned if he ever went there again." Secretary of State John Hay likened a treaty passing through the Senate to a bull going into an arena. "No one could say just how or when the final blow will fall—but one thing is certain, it will never leave the arena alive."

Since 1789 the Senate has belligerently rejected more than 175 treaties, either by outright refusal, or by emasculating them through amendment, or by shelving them. President Wilson suffered one of the bitterest blows of his career from senators entrenched in the foreign affairs committee. The narrow partisan spirit of 1919 destroyed plans for international peace that took another 25 years to form. President Truman already has experienced embarrassments from a Senate scrupulous in its regard of appointments.

The Senate can be bypassed. President Roosevelt used the executive agreement during the war to speed decisions and save himself from the heated anvils of the Senate. But the crisis facing the country and his popularity protected him against rebellion in the

Senate. The executive agreement, however, proved to be a dangerous expedient for the thoughtful processes of peaceful diplomacy. President Roosevelt's own policy of carrying decisions by memoranda or by memory complicated for his successor the determined course of peace as agreed upon at Yalta.

President Truman has employed another technique—"the non-partisan foreign policy." From its very name an admission is made that the country has no policy, that politicians must share in steering the nation to peace. Its success has been limited. With international-minded legislators chosen from both branches of Congress, the plan has been used at the San Francisco Conference, in committees of the U. N. O., and in the new economic organizations. Also, men like Herbert Hoover, Bernard Baruch, John Foster Dulles, have accepted tasks under this policy, though their tenure is limited to the settlement of particular problems and their appointments serve mainly to emphasize the gravity of international issues.

Dissention already has appeared in the non-partisan policy. The withdrawal of leading senators recently from further activities in the U. N. O., the announcement of Republicans that they reserve the right to criticize foreign policy, and President Truman's decision to push his appointments on the Atom Bomb Commission illustrate significant steps away from the truce of party warfare on diplomatic issues. The president's own decision to startle the nation in the crises of Greece and Turkey heralds a return to pressure in dealing with Congress. Declarations of this kind serve to arouse the people, and through them Congress, but they often increase the tension in foreign affairs and put the United States in an uncomfortable position.

This divided responsibility has bred amateurs, for only the self-sacrificing statesman will volunteer for foreign service. Salaries are low, advancement slow, ultimate reward doubtful. Usually the service is pinched by economy-minded congressmen who know little about international practices and see little value in adequate pay for posts thousands of miles from the electorate. The career diplomat receives poverty in exchange for knowledge, and if he has luck and political connections, will reach only some second-rate ministerial post. One career diplomat recently achieved the honor of being named undersecretary of state, but a change in policy removed him and he now edits books on foreign policy.

Sons of wealthy businessmen have been attracted by the dignity of diplomatic positions in the social life of foreign countries. Though they have no desire at first to become diplomats, distinguished ambassadors often have arisen from this group. Mr. Hugh Gibson, however, caustically denounced these wealthy men as the "white spats, tea drinkers, cookie-pushers" brigade.

Since the chief posts in the diplomatic service are usually reserved for party workers, men who have

* Graham H. Stuart, *American Diplomatic and Consular Practice* (New York, 1936), p. 53.

influence with members of the Senate, the tradition of having amateurs is renewed at each election. Retired manufacturers, wealthy industrialists, and defeated legislators are given posts abroad as rewards for campaign contributions. Their service has usually been mediocre, but sometimes a Charles Francis Adams turns up. More often, however, the nation is bewildered by its diplomats. Sudden disclosures from them regarding the behavior of subordinates keep the State Department on its toes, but are not conducive to a well disciplined administration. Recently the abrupt report of subversive actions of Americans in China excited the nation; the Ambassador's accusations found a hearing in Congress; the only result of his report and the investigations thus far has been the Ambassador's nomination as a candidate for the United States senatorship of New Mexico. Thoughts of politics at home too often dominate the actions of diplomats abroad. Too many quit their posts in fits of anger in order to patch political fences at home. Another phenomenon recently has disturbed the nation. Ex-diplomats have been prophets of doom.

But the amateur diplomat is not alone in keeping the nation embarrassed. His wife and children lend color to our international relations. The wife of Norval Richardson, secretary of our embassy in Rome, reportedly waved the American flag, threw kisses, and offered roses to Italian soldiers during the period of our neutrality in World War I. When warned of her actions, she replied: "The United States may be neutral, but I want the whole world to know that I am not. Viva Italia."

The demand for better administration of foreign affairs brought the Rogers Act in 1924 and the Moses-Linthicum Act of 1931. These laws set up civil service requirements and automatic salary advances, and included benefits of annual leaves and retirement. But the staffs of our legations remained inadequate, and for years we had an average of two people at each of our 318 posts. Since the beginning of the war, college professors, industrial experts, and scientists have been added to the staffs to permit expert observation. Information services in particular were helpful in bringing accurate news. The legation in Copenhagen even arranged for expense-free trips of Danish journalists to this country in order that their news reports might reflect a truer picture of American principles. The Department of State also has invited experts from universities and industries to staff its divisions. However, both in the field and at home these experts have been leaving their posts for more rewarding and non-political positions in education or industry.

President Truman recently has attempted to reform the foreign service. He would have Congress pay salaries commensurate with the value of intelligent diplomacy to the nation—taking the service out of the luxury class of industrial magnates and putting it into the hands of the professionals. He advocates a university, or training center, for people interested in foreign affairs, where special instruction in foreign policy and international law could be offered so as to qualify them for diplomatic service. The president made no recommendation for improving the Senate. The workings of this cumbersome body obviously need serious consideration. Some reformers believe that a straight majority vote on all questions concerning treaties and foreign agreements would be

a satisfactory solution. This would prevent at least a minority from tying up foreign decisions.

Obviously, a national center for the study of American foreign policy would make the Senate more responsive and enable the president to secure better appointments. This metamorphosis certainly should reflect also in our international outlook. Its present immaturity might give way to thoughtful understanding. Eventually attention to the formulation of international policy also should bring stability, the desire to think in terms of principles, and a willingness to measure crises in the light of international policy.

The Professional Engineers' Registration Act

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quirement or the benefits of hiring registered engineers became established, the chance of placing incompetent persons in responsible positions decreases and the hazard to persons and property decreases. Any injury to persons or property resulting from technical incompetence after the proposed act becomes law will emphasize to the public and employers in California the benefits of hiring engineers whose competence is established by registration. In a corresponding field, we would not tolerate an unlicensed person's practicing medicine or surgery.

In rebuttal of the argument by opponents that technical competence might be used against the public interest it can be said that an engineer who has a record of such action would not be registered and therefore would not be permitted or asked to approve engineering projects of consequence. This and the fact that all present safeguards against misuse of technical competence could be continued indicate that passage of the bill into law would decrease the misuse of technical competence.

The proposed act, although holding no promise of putting a sudden end to misuse of technical competence, does hold promise of reducing hazards resulting from technical incompetence.

As the greater competence of registered engineers becomes recognized through operation of the act, the standing in the community and in industry of the registered professional engineer will be improved. This effect ultimately will be reflected in greater community leadership and in greater remuneration for professional engineers.

The proposed act has been prepared jointly by the Los Angeles Engineering Council of Founder Societies and the San Francisco Engineering Council after a number of years of study of the questions involved. This action has been sufficient to warrant its support by many engineers. Other engineers who have not wished to support it on this basis have, through careful study, become convinced that they should support it.

It is recommended that all alumni now engaged in engineering either support the proposed act because of their faith in the engineers who have secured its preparation or that they study it carefully to determine whether they individually favor or oppose the proposed act.

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