

Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

The Dead Hand in Foreign Policy

BY A RATHER neat coincidence we have been forced recently to begin discussion of two of our principal foreign policies —

one, the isolation of China and the other the function of NATO in Europe. It is a coincidence that General de Gaulle has



raised the European question just when Senator Fulbright was raising the China question. But it is not a mere accident that the two central policies should be showing all the signs of a breakdown at approximately the same time.

For the two policies were fashioned at about the same time. The China policy was adopted when Mao Tse-tung drove Chiang Kai-shek out of mainland China in 1949. The European policy was adopted in 1948 when the United States rallied Western Europe with the Marshall Plan and a year later with the military guarantees of the NATO Alliance. These two policies were the main American contribution to the problem of the disorders and dangers of the postwar era.

IT SHOULD NOT astonish us today, some eighteen years later, that both policies are up for revision. For both policies are now out of date. Both have been overtaken by events. Both have served their original purpose, and both will have to be re-examined and revised if this country is to have a foreign policy which works in the world as it is today.

For the world today is a very different world than it was in 1948. In Asia the Communist revolution has consolidated its grip on mainland China. Japan is well on the way to the recovery of its position as a world power. Red China, instead of being a weak satel-

lite of the Soviet Union as it was in 1949, is in fierce conflict with the Soviet Union.

In Europe there has been a spectacular recovery of the nations prostrated by occupation or defeat—this is true both of eastern and of western Europe. The American monopoly of nuclear weapons, which was unchallenged when NATO was formed, has been broken. The Soviet Union is a nuclear great power and at the same time, as even Dr. Adenauer has now pointed out, a nation which has a paramount interest in the preservation of peace.

IT WOULD BE surprising therefore if there were not a demand that the old postwar policies be re-examined and revised. It is a petty and shallow view to think that but for a few dissenting scholars and Senators our Asian policy today would be unchallenged, that but for General de Gaulle our European policy would stand intact. Those who talk and write in this vein should try to realize that after every great war there comes a time—some twelve to twenty years later—when the postwar settlement breaks down.

The breakdown of the postwar settlement came 15 years after the end of the First World War when Hitler came to power in 1933. The Reconstruction era broke down after the Tilden-Hayes election, some 13 years after the end of the War Between the States. The European settlement after Waterloo broke down by 1830. It always happens. The postwar settlement breaks down because about 15 years after the end of a war a new generation of men have grown up and taken power.

The President's Schedule and the Day's Activities in Congress Appear today on Page B5.

YET the extraordinary thing is that instead of anticipating the inevitable revision of the postwar policies, the Johnson Administration has merely defended the postwar policies. The result is that the Johnson Administration has lost, indeed has renounced, the initiative in foreign affairs, and is aggrieved because so many people at home and abroad are asking troublesome questions. In this posture the Administration finds itself engaged not in tackling the problem of the postwar era but, as General Marshall used to say, in "fighting the problem" rather than trying to deal with it.

THUS, instead of coming forward with proposals to bring the Western Alliance up to date and to make it consistent with the realities of today, the Administration complains about General de Gaulle's forcing the problem into the open. Why have we not made proposals of our own for the modernization of NATO? Why do we sit back sullenly and demand that General de Gaulle expound his proposals? The reason we sit back and do nothing but complain is that, unfortunately for the country, at a time when wise and resourceful diplomacy is most needed, the State Department is looking only backwards.

The President will find all too soon that his problem is not how to get the better of Senator Fulbright or even of General de Gaulle but of how to master the realities, which they are talking about. The President can overcome the arguments with his domestic opposition. But the argument will not stay won because the realities in Asia and Europe are not under his control. The realities will not yield to his arguments and his briefings, and will continue relentlessly on their course.