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Today and Tomorrow . . . By Walter Lippmann

Presidential Foreign Policy

IT HAPPENS that while our position abroad is deteriorating, the President no longer has a stable body of advisers on whom he can count. In the field of foreign policy there is no longer what we may call a presidential thinking because the expert staff, which is indispensable to presidential thinking has been dissolved.



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The departure of Mr. George Bundy has not been followed by the appointment of a successor. There has instead been a virtual dissolution of the White House staff which under President Kennedy and President Johnson has played so great a part in the shaping of policy. As a result, the making of foreign policy has devolved upon the State Department. But the State Department is much too big and too bureaucratic to shape the world policy of the United States, and as a matter of fact, American policy has been parcelled out among the divisions and the bureaus which specialize on Asia, on Europe, on Africa, and on Latin America.

While changes are imminent in the higher echelons of the State Department, there is no prospect

that the State Department will become capable of acting as a genuine adviser to the President. To provide advice on the presidential level the President must be served by a staff which is above the State Department bureaucracies, not made up of bureaucrats who are themselves encapsulated within it.

UNTIL RECENTLY, as a matter of fact until the departure of Mr. Bundy and the dissolution of his staff, the President maintained a certain essential balance in his foreign policy. He knew that if he were to conduct the kind of war in Vietnam that he had decided to conduct, he ought not at the same time to engage in an irreconcilable quarrel in Europe, a quarrel which would not only alienate France but which would put West Germany in an impossible situation, and embitter still further the Soviet Union. But today the State Department faction which wants to pursue the quarrel is making our European policy.

If the quarrel is pursued, if we do not make it our business to settle it, we shall disorganize the Western Alliance and shall find ourselves as isolated in Europe as we are already isolated in Asia. For in spite of Secretary Rusk's 40-odd commitments to defend countries all over the world, we do not have one single reasonably strong ally will-

ing to share the risks and the costs of the Rusk policy. We are in the strange situation of being an isolated globalist power.

If now we make the catastrophic mistake of forcing the Germans to quarrel with the French, the Western Alliance will be destroyed.

ALTHOUGH Secretary Rusk is a globalist when it comes to committing us to fight and spend all over the globe, he is so preoccupied with Southeast Asia that he has neglected Europe, Africa, and Latin America. The United States is a world power, and the President who conducts its foreign policy must be enabled by his advisers to see all his decisions in the context of the power relationships all over the globe.

This has not been done in recent times. The deterioration of our foreign relations is closely related to the fact that when and as we decide to intervene abroad—be it to save democracy, be it to fight communism to bring peace to mankind, whether it is in Vietnam, in Santa Domingo, in the Congo—we do not act as a great power among great powers which consults with them and seeks not only their help but heeds their advice. We have been acting on our own, without consultation, unilaterally. That is the root of the trouble.