

# Bright View of World

## Election-Year Policy Message Viewed As Alternately Boastful and Defensive

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 9—The state of the world—or at least the state of American foreign policy—is portrayed in fairly bright hues in President Nixon's third annual dissertation on the subject.

The agony of Vietnam is proclaimed almost over, and the dread of isolationism is now proclaimed conquered. The summit partners in Peking and Moscow are pronounced no longer objects of "containment" but potential partners in a "generation of peace." Old Allies in Europe and Asia are told to stop fretting about the shocks and swerves in American policy, for these have served the common good of all.

Appropriately enough for an election year, the President and his principal theoretician, Henry A. Kissinger, have produced a volume that is alternately boastful and defensive. Rummaging freely through their three-year record, they address themselves to virtually every criticism—whether conceptual or procedural—and stake out a formidable record of achievements, breakthroughs, initiatives and promises.

They write proudly that "the United States is once again acting with assurance and purpose on the world stage." And they ascribe their optimism, above all, to the fact that "Vietnam no longer distracts our attention from the fundamental issues of global diplomacy or diverts our energies from priorities at home."

### Opening to China Hailed

The opening to China was the happy outcome of their own foresight and planning, they report. The new moderation in Moscow, they think, must be ascribed to American firmness and persuasion. Japan's resentment of American unilateralism, the report states, while understandable, was unnecessary. Europe's dismay in last year's trade and monetary crisis, it says, was a mere episode on the path toward healthy new agreements.

The report concedes that expansionists in the Soviet Union may still upset a fragile truce in the Middle East or the larger military balance with the United States. The ineffectiveness of the United Nations is deplored. The paucity of American aid programs is ascribed to the stubbornness of the Congress.

But over all, the Nixon record is held up as successful and historic. And it is contrasted with a Democratic record of only spasms, confusions and failures. More than either of its predecessors, this 236-page message to Congress is a campaign document, profusely self-serving, and incomplete or debatable on a number of specific issues.

Nonetheless, it offers many pages of incisive analysis, particularly on the rival Soviet

and American conceptions of the world.

It provides the fullest accounting to date of the negotiations to limit the arms race. It contains a useful summary of the secret negotiations with North Vietnam and the President's reasons for concluding that the private probes had been exhausted. And it offers new clues to some deeper trends in Mr. Nixon's approach to the world.

More clearly than ever before, the President ranks a "new relationship" with the Soviet Union as his paramount objective.

What he seeks in China is a "process" of discussion and long-range rapprochement, he asserts. But what he wants and seeks in Moscow is a further series of specific agreements, not only for arms control but also for restraint in the Middle East, in Europe and on the seas. Trade and other useful ties are offered as bait.

Mr. Nixon explicitly acknowledges the end of the era of containment, which was born with the Truman Doctrine 25 years ago next month. Beginning with the program of aid to Greece and Turkey and culminating in the war in Vietnam, the era was dominated by the American effort to prevent the spread of Communist power and influence by means of economic and military assistance programs, overseas deployment of American troops, intervention in several Asian wars and the threat of nuclear retaliation for challenges to Western Europe and Japan.

### Regional Power Balances

The President deals only implicitly, however, with the new techniques of American leadership that he seeks to employ.

Now that the United States finds itself challenged both militarily and economically, and weary of foreign involvements, the President seems to be counting on a series of regional power balances to minimize American exertions abroad.

He seeks a Soviet-American equilibrium in Europe and the Middle East, with local countries accommodating to the balance and to each other. He seeks a four-nation balance, including Japan and China, in East Asia. And, by shifting American weight from one side to another, he seeks to prevent either Soviet or Chinese dominance in South Asia.

These balances, which would require a fluid policy of alignment with different nations on different issues, are envisioned as sufficient to project American influence while preserving American strength. If Mr. Kissinger were writing from his chair at Harvard instead of the White House, he would undoubtedly have emphasized this conception as the source of Mr. Nixon's confidence that the country can now retrench without lapsing into what he had feared as "neo-isolationism."

But for the moment, the underlying premises are barely discussed while the underlying hopes are projected as achievements.