

Washington Insight



**The Nixon Doctrine
May Not Be Working**

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AT FIRST GLANCE President Nixon's second State of the World message looks like a blare of self-praise. It recounts Mr. Nixon's every deed and has quotes enough to warrant the title, "Thoughts of Chairman Richard."

But everywhere in the document there are submerged concessions to the Administration's critics. The total effect is a somber acknowledgement that the policies described may not be working.

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ON VIETNAM, the message indicates that the President will not accept the rapid pull-out advocated by many Senators and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. Neither will he accept political compromise in Saigon as a price of promoting the talks in Paris. On the contrary, the purpose of Vietnamization has been to give the North Vietnamese "incentive to turn to negotiations rather than protracted war."

But the message concedes that this policy "cannot, except over a long period, end the war altogether."

In Europe, the message affects to "welcome" Chancellor Willy Brandt's Eastern Policy. But it also validates the charge that Washington has been suffusing the policy in a miasmic cloud of suspicion and mistrust.

As to the Near East, the message pushes once again the American peace initiative. The Arabs are to accept an agreement with Israel. Israel is to withdraw from territories occupied in the Six-Day War of 1967. The pre-war Israeli frontiers, the message says with new precision, are

to be modified only by "insubstantial changes."

But the report acknowledges that the initiative is not now being pursued jointly with the Soviet Union.

In the matter of arms control, the President acknowledges that the Russians have advanced a proposal for limiting deployment of the main defensive weapon, the anti-ballistics missile. But the President dismisses an ABM-only accord as a "mere token agreement."

That means he wants to build onto an ABM accord an agreement including offensive weapons. But the President complicates that task by arguing that the multiple warheads which might in future be added to the Russian SS-9 missile are somehow much worse than the multiple warheads that have already been added to American missiles.

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IN THE END, what emerges from the State of the World message is a sad impression. The President and his closest advisers talk a lot about a generation of peace.

But they are caught up in the toils of their own beliefs. They have a deep ideological hostility towards the Communists. They translate any Communist gains into American reverses, and they see potential Communist gains in any move made by left-wing regimes from Germany to Chile. As a result, they frame terms for negotiation that work to block agreement. It is a case of a regime unable to let go, a government incapable of taking chances for peace, a Prometheus self-bound.