

# Foreign Policy -- Force

Washington

Richard M. Nixon once said, in 1968, that while he thought the United States could run itself domestically without a president, "you need a president for foreign policy."

That seemed to be his credo until the Watergate scandals led him to apologize publicly for not having paid enough attention to domestic politics and for having spent too much of his time on foreign affairs.

It was in the field of foreign affairs that Mr. Nixon made some of his main contributions as president.

Even his sharpest critics generally gave him good marks for the series of foreign-policy achievements that gradually moved the United States in the 1970's from confrontation with China and the Soviet Union to a more subtle relationship that held the promise of stabilizing international relations.

And despite the pressures of Watergate and the impeachment inquiry, Mr. Nixon was also able to claim credit for transforming the U.S. into a major force for peacemaking.

This was dramatized by the American role in achieving the two Middle East disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Syria, and by the active American efforts to avoid a war between Greece and Turkey.

From the 1940's and 1950's he had the reputation of having been a fierce anti-Communist. But in the White House, he demonstrated an ability to break with the past and to move boldly toward better relations with the Communist giants.

Probably no president, except perhaps John F. Kennedy, was better prepared for dealing in foreign affairs when elected. As vice president, Mr. Nixon had traveled widely, and out of office he continued his international contacts. It was Mr. Nixon's breadth of knowledge about foreign countries that persuaded Henry A. Kissinger to work for him.

Some skeptics, not aware of Mr. Nixon's background, believed that the President's foreign-policy achievements could be summed up in one word: "Kissinger." But in fact the two men seemed to share a pragmatic approach to policy and to work harmoniously.

Mr. Nixon and Kissinger also shared a penchant for secrecy and surprise that allowed American foreign policy initiatives to burst into the limelight; secret talks on Vietnam; the bold opening to China; the spirit of improved relations with the Soviet Union, and the first steps to break the Middle East deadlock.

Neither the President nor Kissinger showed a special interest in the underdeveloped countries and, despite occasional pledges to pay more attention to Africa and Latin America, they gave those parts of the world low priority.

In foreign affairs the high point of Mr. Nixon's administration was reached in 1972 when he visited China and the Soviet Union, and Americans at home could watch on tele-

vision as their President met in the Great Wall of the People with Chou En-Lai and in the Kremlin with Leonid I. Brezhnev. It was also in 1972 that the break-in at the Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex occurred. Despite the scandals, a rundown of Mr. Nixon's record would have to include the following achievements:

- A negotiated Vietnam cease-fire in January, 1973. It did not succeed in halting the fighting, but led to the withdrawal of American combat forces and the removal of Vietnam as a major irritant in big-power relations.

- An opening to China, the highlights of which were Kissinger's secret trip to Peking in July, 1971, and Mr. Nixon's journey there in February, 1972. These led to the establishment of so-called "Liaison offices" in Peking and Washington.

- A decided improvement in relations with the Soviet Union, marked by numerous agreements with Moscow, and an important accord limiting strategic nuclear weapons — made up of a treaty on defensive weapons, and an interim arrangement on offensive ones.

- A move to find a Middle East settlement, spurred by the Arab-Israeli war of October, 1973, which placed the United States — through Kissinger — in the middle-man's role. In January, 1974, he achieved an Egyptian-Israeli agreement to separate their forces along the Suez Canal. A second disengagement accord between Israel and Syria was worked out by Kissinger in May.

- A decision by the United States to reduce its worldwide involvements, thereby softening the ideological confrontation with the Communist world and lessening its obvious presence in Latin America and Africa.

Abroad, these achievements brought general acclaim for the United States, although from 1971 through 1973 they did lead to a sharp deterioration in relations with Japan because of a succession of Nixon "shocks." The most damaging involved the secrecy surrounding the moves toward China.

Within the Western alliance, the President's clear preference for big-power diplomacy, particularly with such tra-

# for Peace

ditional adversaries as China and the Soviet Union, also caused increased strains.

In mid-1973, Kissinger delivered a major speech in New York, calling on western Europe to join with the United States — and Japan—to draft “a new Atlantic charter.”

The American proposal was based on the assumption that Europeans would welcome an administration initiative to provide some vigor to the alliance, particularly as Mr. Nixon was planning a trip to the continent in late 1973.

But instead the proposal aroused suspicion and haggling between the United States and her European allies over how to discuss their differences. Mr. Nixon's trip was postponed without any formal announcement, largely because of the Middle East war.

The feud increased last winter with Kissinger and Michel Jobert, the then French foreign minister, publicly attacking each other. But the governments of Britain and West Germany changed hands at about the same time, opening the way to the signing in June of a North Atlantic Treaty Organization declaration of principles.

Differences remained, but by this summer, the alliance seemed to be concentrating more on overcoming problems than arguing in public.

In May and June, Mr. Nixon, despite growing domestic pressures brought on by the widening impeachment probe, made trips to the Middle East and to the Soviet Union. The Middle East trip further increased American prestige, but raised questions about whether Washington was giving the Arab states unrealistic expectations about the future.

The Moscow summit meeting, the third by Mr. Nixon with Soviet leaders, was the least fruitful of those meetings, with the two sides unable to reach any further accord on strategic arms limitation. The best they could do was to agree to press for another agreement on offensive arms.

Some speculated that the Russians believed the President's political future made it unwise to reach any substantive agreements at this time. Doubts about Mr. Nixon's future also led the Japanese to seek delays in a contemplated Nixon trip.

Mr. Nixon and Kissinger accelerated in 1969 the process, already begun by previous presidents, of shifting foreign policy management from the State Department to the White House.

Because of this shift in power away from Foggy Bottom, Mr. Nixon's first secretary of State, William P. Rogers, was usually bypassed on important policy matters.

The one exception was the Middle East in which Kissinger, as a Jew, at first avoided involvement. But in the fall of 1973, as secretary of state, he became active in the search for a settlement.

Kissinger's moving over to Foggy Bottom last September ended the rivalry between the White House and the State Department.