

Moral Principles and Strategic Interests: The Worldwide Movement toward Democracy

By

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It is, of course, an honor and a privilege to take part in an event that is named after [former] Governor--as he is known throughout the country--Alf Landon. It has the symbolism of dignity, of intelligence, of commitment, and of humor. [Governor Landon was the unsuccessful Republican candidate for President in the 1936 election which reelected Franklin D. Roosevelt.] And I might say those virtues are embodied in Washington in Senator Nancy Kassebaum [the daughter of Alf Landon], with whom it is my pleasure to work, since she, particularly, is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, the committee that I report to. And, of course, we have Senator Bob Dole who is giving us leadership in the Senate, and other members of the Kansas delegation.

Someone once said of Alf Landon that "like every typical Kansan, he is an honest believer in self-government and civil liberties." So the Landon Lecture Series is an appropriate forum for some basic questions about self-government and civil liberties. Today, I would like to talk about democracy--although not inside the United States but abroad.

A struggle is spreading around the world for democracy. Kansas itself is a symbol of our own national struggle for this ideal. Kansas--"Bleeding Kansas"--was once an infamous battleground. In the middle of the 19th century, this state--and this country--were bitterly divided by an institution that denied human beings their most fundamental rights. The destruction of slavery was slow and agonizing, requiring the bloodiest war this nation has ever known. But by redeeming its democratic promise, America was able to survive its wounds and, ultimately, to prosper.

Today, an extraordinary movement toward democracy is unfolding in diverse corners of the globe. Only a few days ago, the Roman Catholic Church published an "Instruction in Christian Freedom and Liberation," which observes that: "One of the major phenomena of our time . . . is the awakening of the consciousness of people who, bent beneath the weight of age-old poverty, aspire to a life in dignity and justice and are prepared to fight for their freedom."

The evidence of this movement is striking, particularly in the developing world. The most dramatic example is the growth of the democratic center and the decline of social oligarchies in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, 90% of the people of this neighboring region enjoy democratic government, compared to only one-third a decade ago. Examples in other areas include the return to democracy in the past dozen years in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey; a new government in the Philippines; and the movement toward democracy in Pakistan, Thailand, and Haiti.

We should also note the prosperity and stability under free institutions of the Association of South East Asian Nations, called ASEAN, and other Asian countries. The movement toward more open governmental and economic arrangements there and elsewhere has been aided by a growing recognition--in states as diverse as China and several in Africa--that socialist economics does not spur development, that free markets are the surer path to economic growth.

The best evidence of the growing power of this movement comes from people struggling against tyranny--particularly communist tyranny. The Soviet Union and its satellites, once thought immune to popular pressures, are now being challenged around the world: most notably by resistance movements in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, and Nicaragua.

FACTORS COMMON TO MOST DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

Nations have undergone different types of transitions to freedom and self-government. It is a complex process, which can move slowly and imperceptibly or explode in violent convulsion. Indigenous factors are central, and what is crucial in one place may not be in another. Nonetheless, there are certain overlapping factors common to most democratic transitions.

The first is the ruling order's loss of legitimacy. Economic decline, war, corruption, the death of a long-time leader--each factor alone, or with others, signals the failure of the ruling order and creates pressures for a new one to take its place.

A second consideration is the temper of the people and of the nations' elites. They have to "want" democracy. Elites favoring democracy, or who at least accept it as a practical necessity, are essential to providing the leadership necessary for the transition. Connected to this is the *quality of leadership*. Mrs. Aquino is proving an able leader in the Philippines, and King Juan Carlos has proven a model constitutional monarch in Spain. But poor leadership was a factor in the failed democracies of Latin America in the 1960s and early 1970s and in many of the states that became newly independent in the 1950s and 1960s.

The third factor is Western political and economic support. Democratic transitions take place through the efforts of the people themselves, but support from the United States and other Western countries can be crucial. In El Salvador, U.S. involvement has been decisive; and it has been important in Ecuador, Uruguay, and elsewhere in Latin America. Such support played a helpful role in the return of Spain and Portugal to democracy and in Turkey as well.

A fourth factor has been local reconciliation and amnesty. Without an effort to "bind up its wounds," a nation in transition cannot build the tolerance and compromise that are essential to democracy.

A fifth factor in the transition to democracy is the role of independent power centers, such as the military and, in Roman Catholic countries, the church. The military is usually a crucial player: it may help to throw out the autocrat, as in Portugal and the Philippines. It may be a positive force for stability and encouragement of movement toward democracy, as in Brazil. Or it may acquiesce in the transition, as in Argentina and Uruguay. In recent years, the Roman Catholic Church has played a key role in countries like Spain and, again, the Philippines.

There are other factors shaping the complex process of democracy, such as the degree of literacy, the size of the middle class, the condition of the economy, and the strength of the democratic center against extremes of right and left. My point is simply that democratic transitions are complex; they are fragile, and they require careful nurturing to succeed. Just because we played a successful role in the Philippines doesn't mean we will always succeed. Some people

fear the risks in such transitions, recalling developments of the 1970s in Iran and Nicaragua. But the many successful transitions to democracy that I've noted should give us confidence. And if we use our power wisely, become engaged where we can help, and understand the local forces at work, we can advance the ideals we hold so dear.

THE U.S. RESPONSE

This democratic movement is out there; it's happening. The United States, as the strongest free nation in the world, is in a position to influence it. How should we respond?

Our position is unambiguous. The Reagan Administration supports human rights and opposes tyranny in every form, of the right as well as the left. Our policy is unequivocally on the side of democracy and freedom. [Applause] I'm glad to hear there is support for democracy and freedom in Kansas. [Applause]

But not everyone thinks we should respond. A leading argument against an activist U.S. policy comes from the "realist" school of critics. It accepts the fact of American power in the world but argues that we must exercise that power through a cool if not cold, a detached if not amoral, assessment of our interests. Our interests must predominate. In this view, the promotion of democracy abroad is a naive crusade, narcissistic promotion of the American way of life that will lead to overextension and ill-advised interventionism. Moral considerations, we are told, should not have important weight in our foreign policy.

There are two problems, in my view, with this argument. The first is that the American people believe in our nation's ideals, and they want our foreign policy to reflect them. That is the reason why our recent actions in Haiti and the Philippines evoked such widespread support at home. The second is that the basis for this argument--the old dichotomy between realism and morality--is one whose meaning has changed sharply in today's world.

The realist critique ignores the crucial fact that our principles and interests are converging as never before. The reason is that in the modern world, which is shrinking to intimate size through new technologies, the growth of democratic forces advances our strategic interests in practical, concrete ways. What happens in southern Africa or East Asia matters to us economically, politically, and socially; and television and the jet plane won't let us ignore once-distant realities.

I find this convergence of principles and interests one of the most promising developments of this decade, because it gives us an opportunity to rebuild the once great bipartisan consensus on foreign policy, the consensus that fragmented over Vietnam.

NATIONAL INTERESTS

Just how does active U.S. support for democracy serve our interests? First, on the most fundamental level, we are aligning ourselves with the desires of growing numbers of peoples throughout the world. But there is more. We believe that when governments must base policy on the consent of the governed, when citizens are free to make their views known to their leaders, then there is the greatest prospect of real and lasting peace. Just as people within a democracy live together in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect, so democratic states can--and do--live together the same way. The European Community and other inter-European bodies, for example, are models of international cooperation.

A second reason--democratic nations are the best foundation of a vital world economy. Despite our current trade problems, international commerce is central to our own economic well-being. Twenty percent of our gross national product is connected to trade today, compared with only 10% in 1950. People overseas have to be able to afford our goods; and nations that permit

open economies, that give free rein to the individual and minimize government interference, tend to be the most prosperous. Not all such nations are democratic, but most are. They have confidence in their citizens and encourage them to act in ways that stimulate, rather than hamper, economic growth. Democracies also provide the political stability needed for economic development. Further, nations that experience rising living standards through peaceful trade do not want to risk their prosperity in war.

President Reagan put it simply to the UN General Assembly last October: "Free people, blessed by economic opportunity and protected by laws that respect the dignity of the individual, are not driven toward the domination of others."

Third, the movement toward democracy gives us a new opportunity to advance American interests with only a modest commitment of our resources. In the past, it was thought that we could advance our interests, particularly in the developing world, only with a massive commitment of our political, economic, and, sometimes, military power. Today, the reality is very different: We have partners out there eager for our help to advance common interests.

America's friends and allies are all the more important today given the limits on our own resources, the steady growth in our adversaries' power, and the understandable concern of the American people that our friends carry their fair share of the burden. In Central America, Southeast Asia, Turkey, the Philippines, and elsewhere, the success of democracy furthers our own strategic interests.

Fourth, I believe that prudent U.S. support for democratic and nationalist forces has a direct bearing on our relations with the Soviet Union. The more stable these countries, the fewer the opportunities for Soviet interference in the developing world. Remember that it was Soviet intervention in Angola, in Ethiopia, and especially in Afghanistan that helped to undermine confidence in Soviet-American relations in the late 1970s. Success by freedom fighters, with our aid, should deter the Soviets from other interventions. A less expansionistic Soviet foreign policy would, in turn, serve to reduce tensions between East and West.

In an imperfect and insecure world, of course, we have to cooperate and sometimes assist those who do not share our principles or who do so only nominally. We cannot create democratic or independence movements where none exist, or make them strong where they are weak. But there is no mistaking which side we are on. And when there are opportunities to support responsible change for the better, we will be there.

FOREIGN POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Our national interest in promoting democratic forces requires us to take a long, hard look at the means available to us. Despite recent successes, we have to be sober about what we can achieve; and we should anticipate setbacks. As I said earlier, political transitions are fraught with complexity.

The United States possesses a wide range of instruments for promoting our interests abroad. Decisions about which to use, and in what combination, will vary from case to case. Congress has to give us the necessary flexibility. Excessive restraints and micromanagement only complicate our efforts.

One factor is a fundamental aspect of every situation: *our own military and economic strength*. Diplomatic efforts and economic assistance cannot succeed if the United States is seen as unable or unwilling to defend its ideals, its interests, and its friends. That's why President Reagan's achievements in rebuilding our military and restoring our economic prosperity have done

so much to enhance our position in the world. Congress ought to keep this in mind when it votes shortly on proposals that would sharply cut back on defense preparedness.

Let me now turn to the more specific instruments used to implement our policy.

Economic Assistance. The first is economic assistance. Sound economic development is conducive to democratic political development and stability. Openness to fair trade on our part contributes powerfully to this objective and benefits us as well. And this objective also explains why economic assistance has constituted the overwhelming percentage of our direct help to other governments. Under the Reagan Administration, three-quarters of our aid to the countries of Central America has been economic, rather than military, assistance. Worldwide, in the past five years, almost two-thirds of our assistance has been economic; only one-third military. And the Administration's Caribbean Basin Initiative, as an example, opened special trading opportunities to neighboring small economies.

American economic aid can be a powerful tool for democratic development. In Haiti, for example, we exerted the influence of our economic aid at a key moment to facilitate a peaceful transition to a new era, bringing the promise of democracy to a country long ruled by dictatorship. And we are now doing all we can to support the parties trying to establish democratic government there.

Security Assistance. The second instrument is security assistance to friends, which often complements our economic help. Security assistance serves a number of purposes: it helps allies and friendly countries to defend themselves and to deter threats of outside interference; it gives us influence to help mediate conflicts; it helps sustain our access to valuable bases in strategic areas; and it gives us the opportunity to promote the importance of respecting civilian government and human rights. Security assistance also enables allies and friends to accept defense responsibilities that we might otherwise have to assume ourselves--at much greater cost in funds and manpower. Dollar for dollar, it's the most cost-effective security money can buy.

El Salvador is the most recent example of how our military and economic assistance works together to enhance our security even as they strengthen indigenous democratic institutions. Five years ago, the communist guerrillas in El Salvador had launched their so-called final offensive. Rightwing death squads seemed out of control. And, to many, the prospects for democracy seemed hopeless. Our critics--many of whom also oppose aid to the Nicaraguan democratic resistance today--opposed our aid program as a waste of money, as support for an oppressive regime. How wrong they were.

After considerable debate, a majority in Congress came to support our program. The results are something all Americans can be proud of. Today, strengthened by our military aid and stabilized by our economic assistance, El Salvador is writing an extraordinary chapter in the history of democracy. In the midst of a guerrilla war, four fair elections were held in three years; a constituent assembly drafted a constitution; and a president, national legislature, and local officials have been elected according to the constitution's rules. Our assistance gave the long suffering people of that country the chance to speak out and choose democracy as the road to a better life. And they are carrying on the fight themselves. Contrary to the critics, we have not been drawn into any quagmire in El Salvador.

Diplomatic Engagement. The third instrument of U.S. policy in promoting democratic reform is diplomatic engagement. In the Philippines, our influence helped to bring about an election that enabled the Filipino people to make their views known--an election that ultimately led to a new government. Throughout that crisis, we put our prestige firmly behind the principles of democratic choice and nonviolence. The jubilant faces of the crowds in Manila in the days

following Mrs. Aquino's accession to the presidency demonstrated for all the world to see just what America's ideals really mean.

Our diplomatic efforts directly advanced our strategic interests as well. A new, friendly government whose legitimacy is firmly based on the will of the people offers far better prospects for our future base rights in the country. Imagine the enmity we would have earned--and deservedly so--had we tried to block the will of the people and encouraged the use of military force to suppress them. What would have been the future prospect for our bases then?

We are also active in trying to help resolve a number of regional conflicts, believing that in each case a lasting solution depends on the free choice of the people involved: in Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, southern Africa, and Central America. To facilitate such solutions, last October [1985] President Reagan proposed at the United Nations a plan designed to persuade the Soviet Union and the warring parties to work for peace, rather than to continue to pursue a military solution in each of these areas. We're still waiting for a positive response from Moscow.

We have broad agreement in this country on the use of these foreign policy instruments--U.S. military and economic strength, economic assistance, security assistance, and diplomatic engagement--to promote our goal of democratic development.

U.S. Military Power. The last of our policy instruments, one which evokes some controversy, is U.S. military power. It includes a variety of options: weapons sales, the use of military advisers, training, and, as a last resort, direct U.S. military action--as in Grenada.

Political support and modest U.S. military assistance to those resisting Soviet-supported or Soviet-imposed regimes are certainly a prudent exercise of U.S. power. In most cases, the resources involved are small; \$100 million for the Nicaraguan democratic resistance, for example, is a modest investment in a region so critical to our security.

In such a case, the power developed through our assistance may be the only force capable of bringing communist rulers to the negotiating table. But if the adversary won't negotiate, we must be prepared to offer the material assistance needed for victory. We do not favor open-ended escalation or a cynical policy of using the struggles of courageous people to "bleed," in Mr. Gorbachev's phrase, the Soviet empire. But we will help these people be effective in the fight that they have chosen to make for themselves.

Sometimes, our aid needs to be covert. Friendly countries who would funnel our aid may fear open involvement. The local group we are helping may have legitimate reasons not to have us identified as its ally. Covert U.S. aid may give us more room for political maneuver and our adversary more room for compromise. There are other factors as well.

We can never succeed in promoting our ideals or our interests if we ignore one central truth: *strength and diplomacy go hand in hand*. No matter how often this is demonstrated by history, some people simply cannot--or will not--grasp it. Over and over again we hear the refrain: "Forget strength, let's negotiate." No chips; no cards; no hand to play--just negotiate. Unfortunately, it's an objection based on an illusion.

As we work to support the trend toward democracy in the world, we must also remember an important lesson: formulas abound for transitions from traditional authoritarian rule, and recent history shows that such transitions do occur. But there are no successful, peaceful models for getting rid of Marxist-Leninist totalitarian regimes.

That is why our aid to the Nicaraguan resistance is so crucial. The tools we are working with--diplomatic and economic--will not prove effective without a sustained program of military

assistance to the democratic resistance. If America is stripped of this tool, we inevitably will face the unwelcome choice between helplessness and starker action. Negotiations are a euphemism for capitulation if the shadow of power is not cast across the bargaining table. How many times must we learn this simple truth?

Critics who would deny us that tool refuse to face the fact that power is the language the Nicaraguan communists understand. These critics favor the moral ends--the human rights--that have always comprised the idealistic element in U.S. foreign policy; but they ignore the fact that power is necessary as a guarantor of these noble ends. They advocate utopian, legalistic means like outside mediation, the United Nations, and the World Court, while ignoring the power element of the equation--even when faced with a communist regime whose essence is a monopoly of power and the forcible repression of all opposition.

Such an approach is riddled with contradictions. It applauds our support for freedom in the Philippines, Haiti, and South Africa. Some of its advocates even endorse our support for freedom fighters in far-off Afghanistan and Cambodia. But it opposes active efforts to bring freedom to nearby Nicaragua, where democrats on our very doorstep are fighting to save their country from communism.

This schizophrenic approach is not a policy; it's an evasion. It would doom the very ideals and hopes for negotiated solutions it advocates and would make the United States impotent where we are needed most.

GUARDING DEMOCRACY

My topic today has been the significant trend toward democracy in diverse areas of the world and the consequences for the United States. Events--and U.S. policy--have been fostering a world of greater openness and tolerance. But democracy faces many enemies, brutal leaders who feel threatened by tolerance, by freedom, by peace and international cooperation. These enemies will stop at nothing in trying to destroy democracy: deception, propaganda, terrorist violence against innocent men, women, and babies. No tactic is too gruesome in their destructive manipulations. They are at war with democracy, and their means make all too clear their hostility to our way of life.

The terrorists--and the other states that aid and abet them--serve as grim reminders that democracy is fragile and needs to be guarded with vigilance. These opponents of our principles and our way of life think they can vanquish democracy by exploiting free peoples' love of peace and respect for human life and by instilling fear in ordinary citizens to demoralize them and undermine their faith in democracy. The most challenging test for the global movement toward democracy--the sternest test for all free nations--is to summon the will to eradicate this terrorist plague. Because terrorism is a war against ordinary citizens, each and everyone of us must show a soldier's courage. If the terrorists cannot instill fear in us, they are beaten. If free peoples demonstrate what Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations calls "civic valor," and if we do not hesitate to defend ourselves, democracy will prevail.

We live in a dynamic era. In the 1950s and 1960s, Marxist-Leninist revolutions and socialist economics seemed the wave of the future in the developing world. But today, those models have proved bankrupt--morally, politically, and economically. Democracy and freedom are the wave of the future. This trend is opening up new opportunities for U.S. foreign policy. We helped to create this trend, and we can continue to help it along with prudent policies that support other peoples as they strive to realize their own aspirations. In so doing, we advance both our moral ideals and our national interests.

This notable convergence of ideals and interests is the reason why I am optimistic about the future. As the world's first constitutional democracy, we Americans have always felt a profound stake in the ideal of democracy and its future in the world. As citizens of a nation founded on ideals, the American people want their foreign policy to promote their highest values. I am confident the American people can support the goals I have enunciated here today. I am also confident that we have broad public support for the basic policy instruments I have outlined. When we reach a broader understanding of the inescapable role of military power--our friends' power as well as our own--as one of these instruments, we will have completed the rebuilding of the once great bipartisan foreign policy consensus. And the United States will be an immeasurably stronger force for peace and freedom in the world.