

could be dangerous. They are at least strong enough to play the rogue elephant if they are refused admittance to bodies trying to arrange an orderly world economy. At the same time, the challenge of absorbing countries with very different economic principles into institutions already in an uncertain state of health is daunting. It is not a decision that the United States will be allowed to make unilaterally, although they too can act as spoilers.

**If not in doubt, don't consult**

It is the trend towards unilateralism by the US that is most worrying. We have accepted a special role for nuclear superpowers, but when Washington announced SDI without any consultation with its allies, thereby upsetting the basic NATC concept of deterrence, our faith was shaken. It is not restored either by loud voices in the US calling for casting off the entanglements of NATO, and of NORAD as well, and go it alone. How did this come about? Why have Americans shifted from the earnest endeavor to create a world community in concert? One reason is obviously frustration with what they regard as their associates' refusal to share the burden. They have a point, but they do not see that those who are expected to bear the burden must have a legitimate say in determining what the burden will be and what policies will guide its deployment. Power corrupts even the idealists.

When John Kennedy came to Washington with the brightest and best of Boston, a friend in the Canadian embassy wrote to me that he found them all very impressive intellectually, but he wished they had a few doubts. Then the President proclaimed that America would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." It was thrilling stuff — rather like listening to the glorious sound of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" without noticing the words, which are really scary — all that mystic stuff about seeing the glory, tramping out the vineyards and knowing the truth that goes marching on. Personally I would rather hear Americans singing "America the Beautiful." It is awfully corny, but perhaps the solid qualities of America we like best are corny.

That missionary zeal can be the bright side of American exceptionalism, but it can also be the dark side, when they are so sure they are right that they listen to no one else. There is what has been called the imperialism of anti-imperialism. I recall being in Saigon in 1955 when the French were leaving and the Americans were moving in — as advisers of course, utterly convinced that they were a different breed from the European imperialists. The Americans were there to help the Vietnamese to salvation. They were nice guys and they meant it. It is a mistake to write off the high motives that led them into that great disaster. They had been called to a great crusade and the issue was stark, the forces of good against the forces of evil. The wise men who fashioned American policy at the end of the war had argued sanely for containment of undue Soviet expansion, just that. However, to rouse a reluctant people, still hopeful about the Russians, they oversimplified the issue and made confrontation with communism a religious rather than a strategic issue and compromise a sin. The Russians, North Koreans and the Viet Minh did all they could to make that view

plausible. So we had two paranoid superpowers. Confidence of rectitude led to a gross overestimate of American strength, and pride sucked them into catastrophe. If they were virtually alone in the fighting it was because they had disregarded the advice of their allies.

**Judicial imperialism**

I shall mention briefly what has been called American judicial imperialism and only to support my argument for sublimation. The extraterritorial assertion of US laws has now led Britain, Canada and a number of other countries in exasperation to pass legislation to counter their pretensions, such as our Extraterritorial Measures Act of 1984. This incapacity of Americans to recognize that their writ does not run worldwide is attributable in part to their constitution in which Congress must have the last word on everything. The legal adviser to the State Department, Judge Sopher, shocked us recently by saying that the President and Congress must be unfettered by international law. It is an attitude that is going to be harder to get away with as hegemony declines. What I would like to point out, however, is that sometimes the US has an acceptable motive even if its unilateral assertion is unacceptable. It may be that the interests of the world community would be served by the recent attempt to apply abroad higher American standards for environmental controls on nuclear reactors. We have to persuade Americans that these are common problems on which the OECD and other international bodies are trying to act. The threat to the ozone layer, the prospect of climate change, not to mention acid rain on all continents, the implications of Chernobyl urgently require multilateral agreement and not just the extension of US rules.

The Americans, bless their hearts, are terrible windbags. So it is important to judge US policy by deeds rather than words. Whatever the President once said, he has had genial chats with Comrade Gorbachev and is clearly very anxious to get an arms control agreement with the untrustworthy Russians. He is still pretty inconsistent about which are acceptable and unacceptable totalitarians, but the US has been instrumental in removing dictators in the Philippines and Haiti — and possibly even South Korea. While he fulminated about the Soviet naval threat in the Persian Gulf, his tough ambassador to the UN, General Walters, was in Moscow and Beijing seeking agreement on a Security Council resolution by which all the great powers would act, as the UN Charter requires, to cope with a threat to the peace. That is a move which in spite of the much louder sober rattling has been publicly supported by Messrs. Shultz and Baker, and over that other staunch member of the Reagan team, Margaret Thatcher. There are indications that tough-minded Americans are having second thoughts about the UN — a subject which has seriously divided Ottawa and Washington. They are reconsidering their posture on finances and recognizing, I think, that their resentment against unfair anti-American rhetoric and bureaucratic waste has gone too far. They are finding that in an age of interdependence they cannot afford not to play the UN game. Recognizing that they need GATT, a UN body, is significant. We are deafened by the protectionist oratory of Congress, but the administration preaches freer trade like a gospel hymn.