

future, as pointed out by Sandra Vogelgesang in the July 1978 *Foreign Affairs*, it is likely that the inability and unwillingness of the American people to pay the costs of effective means to promote human rights will lead to disillusionment.

Despite his sensitivity to symbols, Carter does not have the skill to use symbols in arousing the nation. He clearly does not command the rhetorical skill to arouse people to follow him. His skill in lobbying Congress has grown, as witnessed by his victories on the issues of Panama and Middle Eastern plane sales, but they are not sufficient, as the impasse on his energy legislation indicates.

Carter has an underlying stubbornness and integrity, but he has also demonstrated a capacity to learn. He modified somewhat his human-rights campaign to make it more compatible with realities in the international environment. He adapted to the Sadat initiatives in the Middle East, and his diplomacy in the Horn of Africa showed signs of adeptness. On Namibia, too, there has been success. Diplomatic successes have tended to come in areas that have not become, through Presidential rhetoric, infused with symbolism. In the near future, the Carter Administration is likely to attempt to resolve the issue of Taiwan with the Chinese Government. While there are difficult substantive problems involved, it may be that Carter's ability to gain support for whatever solution he comes to may rest on his refraining from burdening the policy with symbolism. Unfortunately, the "playing-the-China-card" rhetoric that has become popular in Washington is not a hopeful sign.

Middle East

One area where Carter has demonstrated adeptness and serious resolve is his Middle East diplomacy. Early in his Administration, he demonstrated initiative in his quest for a renewal of the Geneva Conference and by bringing the Palestinian issue into the public arena for debate. That initiative was wrested from him by President Sadat, and the United States lost control in Middle East diplomacy until Carter arranged and conducted the serious top-level conference at Camp David last September. While regaining the initiative, Carter gave up the sound principle used in his 1977 policy of including all of the interested parties in Middle East negotiations.

There are problems of political style that are also pertinent to developing a foreign-policy consensus. President Carter's style is one in which, sometimes after

careful thought and less often off-the-cuff, he stakes out a position, gets out in front on the issue, and then attempts to gather support. There is a private quality to the deliberations that lead him to positions. It is impossible to operate in the American political system without bargaining, but Carter's style pushes the bargaining into the public arena, where it often gives him the appearance of weakness. Thus, when Carter finds it necessary to compromise or to deal in trade-offs for support, he publicly changes his position, or he issues an apology.

This style has two effects that do not portend success for developing a new foreign-policy consensus. First, it creates space for a great deal of extrinsic public debate, such as that over the Panama Canal treaties, that leads to the appearance of disarray in American foreign policy and more animosity and confusion than is necessary. If the President had sought the advice of the Senate during the negotiating stage of the treaties, it might have been possible to avoid the embarrassment of a parade of Senators to Panama negotiating their reservations with General Torrijos.

The public bargaining style has also tended to encourage division in American society. Specifically, President Carter shares at least part of the burden of the alienation of the American Jewish community that supports Israel. His style has helped to put him into a position in which, if he stands firm, the cleft in the American public will broaden, and, if he relents, he will appear to be weak.

What, then, are the prospects for the early development of a new American consensus on foreign policy? President Carter's pragmatism may bring about a rough adaptation between American aspirations and the realities of the rest of the world, but that does not necessarily mean coherence and constancy. His learning capacity may enable him to improve marginally his skills and style, but these are characteristics of the man that are unlikely to change in any fundamental sense. It is highly unlikely that President Carter will become an inspiring orator.

It seems unlikely, therefore, that a new American foreign-policy consensus will develop in this Administration. Without constancy, American foreign policy will continue to be unpredictable. It will also be subject to sharp international debate, and it is very likely to be discontinuous when the next president is elected, for, without consensus, foreign policy has no fixed guidelines for continuity.

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