

ident Carter brought to office a set of values and beliefs that have led him to attack a wide variety of problems. His values are those that grow out of and nourish democracy. He is dedicated to openness in government, efficiency in administration, and liberal humanitarianism abroad. He is an economic conservative, but in him is a strain of populism that seeks reform. He is ambitious to be a "great" President without leading his country in war.

Some of these values are specially pertinent to foreign policy. As Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out in his *Democracy in America*, democratic values are the enemy of effectiveness in foreign policy. In particular, the democratic virtues of openness and debate are the enemies of the foreign-policy virtues of secrecy and dispatch. Carter's dedication to debate within his Administration — for example, between Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski over whether to "link" other issues to the SALT negotiations — and his tolerance for the outspokenness of United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young give the appearance of disarray. This appearance makes it more difficult for Carter to engender support.

Framework

One of the most useful instruments that the President could develop to create a new consensus would be a conceptual framework — that is, an intellectual construct that performs three critical functions: (1) it brings about consistency between a country's values and political institutions, on the one hand, and the international system, on the other; (2) it provides a coherent set of guidelines for foreign-policy decisions; and (3) it makes foreign policy serve to give a sense of purpose to the nation.

The development of a conceptual framework cannot be the work of one man, particularly a President who is too busy to labour over careful analysis. Identification and analysis of problems has to come largely from the governmental and academic bureaucracies. Moreover, the generation of a consensus based on a conceptual framework is partly the work of executive-branch officials and Congressional leaders, but the shaping of a conceptual framework is, finally and foremost, the business of the President.

In his attempts to reorient American foreign policy, President Carter has not yet met the tests of creating an adequate conceptual framework. The centrepiece of his drive for reorientation was the human-

rights initiative. There are plenty of ambiguities and contradictions in this, but it has performed one of the functions of a conceptual framework — it has restored to the American people a sense of purpose in foreign policy. It has failed, however, either to provide a coherent set of guidelines for decision-making or to deal realistically with the international system. Beyond human rights, President Carter has sought to re-emphasize alliance cohesion and to set his Administration apart from its immediate predecessors by removing *détente* from first place in foreign-policy priorities.

The Carter Administration has developed other specific objectives: non-proliferation; a commitment to bringing about change in Southern Africa, specifically by endorsing a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa and by working for internationally-approved settlements in Rhodesia and Namibia; withdrawal of troops from Korea; pursuit of a general settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the Geneva Conference; and a coherent energy policy. The resultant flurry of activity is not guided by a clear sense of purpose and a set of priorities that will generate a new foreign-policy consensus. Moreover, much of the President's rhetoric shows more effectiveness at symbol manipulation than careful analysis.

Presidential skill

The development of a consensus rests not only on conceptual clarity but also on the President's skills. Carter's outstanding skill is his sensitivity to the electorate at the symbolic level. This sensitivity provided him with his ticket for the journey from Plains, Georgia, to Washington, D.C. For electoral purposes, this is a tremendous strength. For foreign policy it may be a weakness. Symbols can become a substitute for analysis and for the grubby work of persuasion and bargaining.

There are a number of areas where Carter's treatment of issues at the symbolic level is more in evidence than his command of them at the analytic level. The human-rights campaign may thus be characterized, as may the non-proliferation policy. His symbolic handling of energy problems was a fizzle. Moreover, there are both apparent and impending problems connected with the human-rights campaign. By staking out a public position in denying that Anatoly Shcharansky was a spy but having no effective means of preventing his conviction by Soviet authorities, Carter displayed an inherent weakness of his position. In the