

humanely interrogated. The fact that clandestine operation manuals have dropped the term "enemy" for "the opposition" is in itself revealing. In the last few years the exchange rather than execution of captured espionage agents has become almost routine, especially between the U.S. and the USSR.

Traditionally, enemy agents, if tried and convicted during military operations, are either executed or condemned to life imprisonment. Hence there should be no cause for surprise if the Vietnamese agent in the Green Beret case paid what Churchill called "the forfeit in secret service work." What is cause for surprise, in view of the widespread use of torture during military interrogations—conducted by regular army units, is General Abrams' statement: "The Special Forces are going to have to show a higher regard for human life."

In the American system, the responsibility for upholding the rules of land warfare and humane standards for the interrogation and treatment of prisoners rests squarely on the theater commander. The evidence is mounting that the conflict in Vietnam has been allowed to degenerate into what is apparently the cruelest and most barbarous war in which the U.S. has participated. When the German armies invaded and occupied Poland in the fall of 1939, their Commander-in-Chief, General Blaskovitz, resigned in protest against the atrocities committed by the SS and Secret Police "Action Groups" over which he had no effective control under the Nazi administrative set-up. Admiral Canaris, the head of German military intelligence, the *Abwehr*, secretly but firmly refused to carry out direct orders from Hitler to assassinate the French Generals, Weygand and Giraud. This does not mean that the *Abwehr* abstained from executing convicted double agents under field conditions comparable to those in the sensationally exploited Green Beret "murder" case. Such executions are universally recognized as Standard Operating Procedure for such agencies as the Special Forces intelligence units. However, the torture of prisoners so widely tolerated in the Southeast Asian theater is in direct violation of both the spirit and letter of the law. To their undying moral credit the Germans still pursue and prosecute war criminals who stained the honor of the German Army in World War II. After fighting a moral crusade against Hitler and his SS legions, the least the U.S. can do (in this author's view), in the light of My Lai and similar incidents, is to match the German record, not merely because even unwritten laws are meant to be obeyed, but because it is the morally right thing to do.

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"The Perils of Reform Isolation"

New York, N. Y.

Dear Sir: Surprisingly, no one has commented on Ernest W. Lefever's article "The Perils of Reform Intervention" (*worldview*, February, 1970). Dr. Lefever is a noted scholar, and his point on the contradiction between security-isolation and reform-intervention is well taken. But the basic thrust of the article ought not go undiscussed, for it seems to advocate the same contradiction in reverse: security-intervention and reform-isolation. And that is equally bad policy.

What Dr. Lefever appears to say is that any attempt to stimulate basic political reform abroad by means of foreign policy is not only a violation of Article 27 of the U.N. Charter (domestic jurisdiction), but both morally arrogant and politically unwise. He praises the "political sense and moral wisdom" of Vattel, who held that no sovereign state may inquire into, judge, or attempt to influence the manner in which another sovereign rules. At most, says Lefever, a state may encourage development in another state as a secondary end of its policy, but may never pressure another regime to effect internal political or social reform.

Such a superficially virtuous "reform-isolation" (I would prefer to call it "moral isolationism") may have been a viable option for the absolutist princes of self-contained states in eighteenth century Europe, but it is unrealistic and outmoded today (though still attractively utopian in its legalistic simplicity). Ours is, after all, an incredibly complex world: public opinion has never been more influential on foreign policy; it is very difficult to draw a hard line between foreign and domestic issues; and rising expectations of justice, expressed in transnational ideologies, racial movements, revolutionary forces, and even cultural and religious doctrines—all heavily laden with moral content—have never had freer rein nor enjoyed higher political potency in world affairs. In short, it is a truism today to speak of the policy relevance of international social forces: Columbia University has had a professor of same for several years now. The doctrine of "moral isolationism" (as I see it) appears to be based upon the following premises:

1. That "the highest purpose of foreign policy is security and peace," while "the highest purpose of domestic policy is justice." (One winces at the dichotomy, since both policies continually intersect, and

justice cannot be excluded from foreign policy without doing violence to the highest values of the majority of mankind, including American voters. No politician has ever taken lightly the moral values of his own constituency or of those who can affect it. Foreign policy makers are politicians, and American prestige abroad is a definite part of the national interest: world politics cannot be sterilized from moral factors by a legal antisepsis any more than can domestic politics. Nor can the world be fragmented into moral compartments competing in an amoral Hobbesian whole. As a logical construct this may be a useful methodology for game-theorists and international lawyers, but it is not concrete politics.)

2. That a policy of genuine nonintervention is feasible with regard to internal conditions in foreign countries; that we can somehow "not take-sides" on such questions as *apartheid* or the meaning of democracy in the Thieu regime. (C. L. Sulzberger—no idealistic revisionist—has recently reminded us that the U.S. in particular cannot avoid taking stands: "An earth shrunk to nothing by modern communications won't allow its wealthiest and strongest component to escape; it requires intervention in virtually all its problems." Whatever we do or do not do produces a reaction, at home and abroad. Which leads him to recall the observation of Talleyrand: "Nonintervention is a political and metaphysical term and means about the same as intervention." It should not be difficult, therefore, to see that by doing "nothing" about Rhodesia, South Africa, Brazil, etc., we are actually favoring oppressive regimes over their victims.)

3. That there are no degrees of pressure which can be exerted by one government on another which are quite respectable, both legally and morally: any pressure at all, even an adverse judgment, is a violation of law and the U.N. Charter. (The U.N. itself has not interpreted Article 2/7 in this way, nor has international law ruled out techniques for influencing regimes, such as public statements and policy changes in foreign aid, trade, investment, travel, resolutions in international organizations, to say nothing of the encouragement of demonstrations. There is a whole calculus of options open to the prudent policy-maker. Military intervention is not the only alternative to inaction; much subtler means are available, depending on the susceptibility of the regime in question. No nation or government is obliged to close its eyes to moral outrage. Should the world community have kept silent about Dachau and Bergen-Belsen if Hitler's armies had stayed at home?)

4. That the U.S. should not attempt to "export our virtues" because "democracy and fair play are not

easy to come by and they cannot be grafted onto an alien culture." (This can be taken as more arrogant than it was probably meant: as if Brazilians, Greeks, and Czechs, for example, do not yearn for fair play as we do. It seems more arrogant, at least, to judge a people this way than to exert pressure on the undemocratic regimes which are not giving them fair play.)

5. That there are no universally recognized standards of human rights which apply to all men; rather, local tyranny is to be explained or excused by the principles of cultural relativism and self-determination. (If this be true, then the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the U.N. is empty verbiage, and its Human Rights Commission, conventions on human rights, resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, as well as the finding of torture in Greece by the Council of Europe, should all be ignored—and thus emasculated—by states in their practical policy decisions. This would be a giant step backward for mankind. *Pacem in Terris* looked forward to the day "when every human being can find in this organization [the U.N.] an effective safeguard of his personal rights.")

6. That it is states (which means governments, since the state is an institutional complex operated by human beings) which are the only actors that really count on the world stage; it is not peoples hungering for justice, reform, even revolution. (This legalistic view—no longer entirely valid even in contemporary international law—takes us back to before the French Revolution, at least. Metternich and the Czar had learned that it was no longer true in foreign affairs. Today it ignores the rapidly growing sense of the solidarity of the whole human race in a "people-to-people" relationship. It fails to see that the world is becoming a single political form with all mankind as its body politic—pluralistic to be sure, but more and more aware that we are all "riders on the earth" together. And so it denies the relevance of this solidarity to policy-making. In this view, the State Department should ignore—if it could—the hopes of blacks for Rhodesia, of Jews for Israel, of Americans for Czechoslovakia, of Clergy and Laymen [and millions of others] Concerned About Vietnam. It should disregard the U.N. treaty on racial discrimination and the Genocide Convention. It should dismiss the views of international non-governmental organizations, the World Council of Churches, and the Holy See—unless, of course, they concern U.S. military security. If the State Department did this, it could cut its staff in half tomorrow.)

7. That, basically, stability in the world is independent of justice, and considerably more important.

"Law and order" at the international level, not justice, is the goal of policy; national security has little to do with the presence or absence of social justice, human rights or economic equity throughout the world community. (How many political scientists who have studied the causes of war would agree to that? Not many. And even thinkers in other fields have not agreed—observers as disparate as Thomas Aquinas and Robert McNamara, for example. The latter said boldly in his headline-making Montreal speech that armaments cannot guarantee American security as long as present disparities of wealth exist among the nations of the world; the former had said 700 years earlier that peace is indirectly the product of justice, which removes obstacles from its path. Thomas also said that peace is directly the work of love. Is there no way far love to cross national boundaries, or if it did, would this be politically irrelevant?)

These are the premises of "moral isolationism" as I read them. Perhaps Dr. Lefever would not agree with this presentation, based as it is on a strict construction and the implicit logic of his statements. In any event, these premises are judgments which as a political scientist I cannot accept as sound analysis, and which as a Christian, believing in a basic universal ethic and human brotherhood, I cannot hold to be moral.

Dr. Lefever asks, who are we to tell the Greeks or the Brazilians what kind of government they should have? What has become of our cherished doctrine of self-determination? But the questions that should be asked are different: Aren't the Greeks and Brazilians our brothers? Will we shore up the regimes which are oppressing them? Is self-determination the right of

a military clique or a racist minority to dominate the majority, or the right of that majority to freely determine its own constitution and way of life? Is not self-determination for all peoples a right we should promote by legitimate pressures in our foreign policy?

As for Dr. Lefever's contention that the present regime in Rhodesia protects the fundamental rights of all its citizens and grants a meaningful franchise, this is too ridiculous to be taken seriously. The recent constitution and Land Tenure Act (and Rhodesian history since 1923) refute it completely. One cannot help suspecting that Lefever's apparent blindness to the evils of white racism in Africa (his only attack on injustice in this tragic world was reserved, incredibly, for black regimes there)—as well as his apparent lack of concern over injustice elsewhere—may be due to a desire to make the bitter medicine of reform-isolation a more palatable serum against a possible epidemic of reform-intervention. Theories, especially doctrinaire ones, can distort our perceptions. How else explain, in addition, his silence about the national disease we have contracted through our security-intervention in Vietnam?

If that sounds rude, I do not intend it to. Dr. Lefever is perfectly correct in warning against the perils of an indiscriminate policy of military intervention for purposes of reform. More Vietnams could be the result. But the dilemma is not what he says it is. A policy of moderate and prudent intervention in the interests of security *and* reform is the only choice we have today, given our power and the inevitable (I would also say desirable) infusion of moral solidarity as a vital force in international politics.

John Alanson Lucas, S.J.

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