

MEMO

TO: PT
FROM: CHRIS C.

RE: OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY SPEECH

HAZARDS OF AN EAST WEST APPROACH

Just when we all thought that foreign policy discussions would be moving away from the globalist/regionalist rut into a more evolved synthesis along comes a new American leader who propells the debate straight back to the old terminology.

With Ronald Reagan in office, we are once again dining on a full plate of globalist rhetoric and policy. Once again our foreign policy will revolve around the Soviet orb, and all those regionalists steeped in the knowledge of Central America or the Horn of Africa, those folks will either stand on the sidelines or discover the Soviet threat.

It's not that I regard the Soviets as a benign world force, far from it. (THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN, THE STRATEGIC BUILDUP, THE CONVENTIONAL BUILDUP, CHEMICAL WARFARE CAPABILITY)

What irritates me is the purity of this particular brand of anti Soviet policy making. It is the purity, the lack of imagination that makes this particular version of globalism so difficult to believe in and such a clumsy instrument overseas (if not at home).

I have three examples in mind where the Administration has applied or misapplied their old cold war approach - the Mid East, Central America, and Southern Africa.

The Mid East where the Israeli-Arab dispute invades the heart and soul of every inhabitant of the region, this is where the Administration says the Soviet threat to peace reigns supreme.

The Saudis, who have asked for a new round of sophisticated American arms including the AWACS radar surveillance plane, seem to have other foes in mind than the Soviets, at least that is what they have said publicly. They say Israel is the major threat to peace. Those who know the Mid East well, can see through the interference. They know that the big issue is the Palestinian question. Settlements on the West Bank, which will be expanded by Prime Minister Begin, the Jerusalem issue, and the political future of the Palestinian people, these are the issues that sear and burn the Mid East.
(DISCUSS AWACS, HOW THE ADMIN. IS FORCING THE ISSUE AND PROBABLY WILL LOOSE, EMBARASS THE SAUDIS, CONFIRM THEIR INSTABILITY TO THEIR FOES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, AND HURT THE US REPUTATION FOR RELIABILITY, ETC., PLUS HOW THE ADMINISTRATION WAS PROPELLED ON THIS ILL ADVISED COURSE BY AN OVER EMPHASIS OF THE SOVIET THREAT TO THE SAUDIS)

In Central America, the Adminsitration launched their anti Soviet set piece with great fanfare and a glistening, now discredited white paper on Cuban-Soviet subversion in El Salvador.

Again, few doubt that it is in Soviet and cuban interests to promote a revolution in El Salvador, but ~~the certainty that such is their interest~~ does not equal how effective they are on the ground.
(IN JAN. DUARTE AND THE MILITARY HELD BACK THE GUERILLA OFFENSIVE AND PROSPECTS WERE BRIGHT, NOW THE GUERILLAS ARE DEEPLY ENTRENCHED, HAVE TAKEN OUTPOSTS, CONTROL RURAL AREAS - ALL WITH THE HELP OF 56 AMERICAN ADVISORS, HELICOPTORS, NEW NAVAL PATROL BOATS. WE ALL WANT TO PREVENT A FAR LEFT TAKEOVER IN EL SALVADOR, BUT IS YANQUI GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY AND A HIGH PROFILE MILITARY PRESENCE THE WAY TO DO IT? GUERILLA MOVEMENTS TAKE HEART WHEN THE AMERICANS GET INVOLVED IN SUCH A BIG WAY - SUDDENLY THERE IS AN ISSUE WHICH HAS SUCH DEEP ROOTS IN CENTRAL AMERICA - YANQUI IMPERIALISM. FAIR OR NOT, ACCURATE OR NOT, IT IS A FACT OF POLITICAL LIFE. IT HAS BEEN BURIED BY THIS NEW WHITE HOT GLOBALISM)

Guatemala is an El Salvador in the making. Run by a military regime which has been accused of orchestrating mass murder, torture and mayhem on left wing and centrist activists and now in the process of the most brutal campaign of terror against the large (some estimates as high as 65%) Indian population, Guatemala is ripe for a guerilla insurrection of Salvador style proportions. President Carter cut off military aid because of the grave human rights violations of the regime. President Reagan has sent military jeeps and trucks.

(THE AD. ESCHEWS NEGOTIATIONS, BRISTLES AT FRANCE AND MEXICO'S SUPPORT FOR THE SALVADORAN GUERILLAS, STILL TALKS ABOUT GOING TO THE SOURCE OF ALL THE EXTERNAL AID, CUTS OFF AID TO NICARAGUA, AND HELPS TO POLARIZE THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BOTH SALVADOR AND GUATEMALA. JEAN KIRKPATRICK TOURS LATIN AMERICA AND AVOIDS THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS IN CHILE AND ARGENTINA.

In Southern Africa, the story is not so much ludicrous as it is ironic and disappointing. I don't think anyone doubted the Admin.'s sincere interest in bringing about a Namibia settlement. Now, thanks to the diplomatic heavy hand of the anti Soviet approach, much of the third world and some of the first see Ronald Reagan and the apartheid regime in a fervent anti communist embrace.

I don't think this is what the Administration had in mind. "Constructive engagement" with South Africa is the way Chet Crocker saw the policy last winter. Somewhere along the line, that fine balancing act lost its bearings and the Cubans and Soviets in Angola became the focus. Consider the evidence: when South Africa launched massive invasion of Southern Angola, Chet Crocker was soon out in front of the American Legion saying that the Administration would not take sides between black and white in South Africa. Secretary Haig said the raid into Angola must be seen in the context of the Cuban and Soviet presence in Angola. Then in a symbolic gesture which isolated us even from Maggie Thatcher, we vetoed a Security Council Resolution condemning South Africa for the raid.

As if that was not bad enough, the South Africans seized the opportunity and paraded their Soviet prisoner captured in Angola, telling the world how Angola and SWAPO are nothing but Soviet puppets. That left the Administration nodding in agreement or at least seeming to do so. If perceptions are important, and conservatives believe they are just as much as liberals do, then this Administration has a real problem in Africa today.

As for the Namibia negotiations, South Africa is now in the ideal position of having the most powerful of the Western advocates of a settlement just where they want them - sympathetic to the view that SWAPO is a communist puppet which would destroy Namibia and threaten South Africa.

(CONCLUDE WITH: THE ISSUE IS NOT THE SOVIET THREAT, ALL AGREE IT EXISTS AND MUST BE DEALT WITH. THE ISSUE IS CREATIVITY AND BALANCE IN DEALING WITH THE SOVIETS AND THE REGIONAL ACTORS AND OUR INTERESTS. DON'T SEE THE BALANCE. SEE AN EXTREME APPROACH WHICH PRODUCES MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR ADVERSARIES THAN DEFEATS. DOGMA EQUALS HAZARDS.)