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## A PLEA FOR COMMON SENSE IN U. S. FOREIGN POLICY

A Rejoinder by Senator George McGovern (D. -South Dakota) to President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Tuesday, May 30, 1978; The U. S. Senate, Washington, D. C.

President Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, is apparently determined on a foreign policy of crisis and confrontation. Watching Mr. Brzezinski on Meet the Press last Sunday, we can only conclude that in his mind the Soviets and the Cubans are 19 feet tall and about to take over the planet. He has apparently concluded that the primary battle for world supremacy is to be fought in the jungles of Africa with the Cubans and the Russians arrayed against the Americans and the Chinese. True enough, Mr. Brzezinski invited the Europeans and the Africans to join the battle; but who really thinks they have any stomach for that?

Mr. Brzezinski's conduct in briefing the Chinese in detail on our strategic arms discussions with the Soviet Union was a strange, if not foolish, tactic. If it was designed to infuriate the Soviets, thus making more difficult the task of arms negotiations, it has doubtless done that. If it was designed to send a public signal that we like Chinese communists better than Russian communists, it has probably done that. But if it was designed to depict Mr. Brzezinski as a thoughtful, responsible and sensitive national security advisor, it has not done that.

Beyond this, one can only wonder at the wisdom of Mr. Brzezinski treating the Chinese to inside briefings on our confidential national security studies while he, in turn, reacted in awe to their "masterful analysis" of a world in crisis. Mr. Brzezinski, inspired in part by the Chinese, sounded more alarms in 30 minutes than even a dangerous globe can justify in its worst hours. No national security advisor and no President wants to appear faint-hearted in the face of a genuine crisis. But to avoid being "chicken" one need not become "Chicken Little."

The world is dangerous enough without inventing new dangers that exist only in the mind of the beholder. The sky did not fall, no matter how passionately Chicken Little proclaimed it.

We cannot conduct foreign policy as though every stirring in Africa, Asia or the Indian Ocean is another Cuban missile crisis. Foreign policy must be selective in centering upon the few fundamental interests of the nation — not the sideshows and minor distractions. We cannot treat a factional quarrel in Angola as though it were an attack on Berlin. We cannot believe that uncertain questions of help to the Katangans are more important than a strategic arms agreement designed to save humanity from nuclear catastrophe.

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Without minimizing our problems, it is a fact that the United States is far and away the world's strongest power — militarily, economically and politically. We have more allies around the globe than any other nation. We have well-defended bases in every part of the globe. We have a mighty two-ocean navy with devastating nuclear and conventional firepower. We have the world's finest air force and the most accurate missiles with the greatest number of warheads. We have a strong, mobile army and marine corps. We are the pre-eminent power in the Western Hemisphere, in the NATO European partnership, in the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and in the Pacific.

It does not serve our interests to elevate Soviet influence and power while minimizing our own. Yet, Mr. Brzezinski has by implication greatly exaggerated Soviet and Cuban power while denigrating our own.

Actually, the Soviets are nearly alone in the world — with little Cuba their one apparent dependable ally. Communist China, with its one billion people, is not an ally but a major source of anxiety for the Russians.

Russia has no dependable base of influence and power on the European continent except for its enforced presence on the eastern fringe of Europe. There is little Soviet influence or power anywhere in Latin America other than Cuba. The Soviets have few bases available to their naval and other military forces beyond their own borders.

Speaking of the Soviet Union, Mr. Brzezinski talks of "a sustained and massive effort to build up its conventional forces, particularly in Europe," and "to strengthen the concentration of its forces on the frontiers of China...."

There does seem to be evidence of such a buildup. But at a time when western military outlays are rising, when Mr. Brzezinski treats China as a NATO auxiliary, and global arms spending is on the increase, where else would one expect the Soviets to concentrate their forces if not on their common borders with Europe and China?

With or without an arms buildup, the Russians have a raw and agonizing memory of the devastation of two world wars. The elderly, cautious men who now rule the Kremlin are not likely to invite another visitation of that agony. At the same time, we are well-advised to do all that we reasonably can to induce restraints both on nuclear and conventional arms increases on the part of the Soviets, and on the part of ourselves and our allies. The defense of Western Europe is certainly a crucial American interest. That interest is better served by the maintenance of our military deterrent plus quiet, patient negotiation with the Soviets rather than bombastic ultimatums and alarmist cries.

Mr. Brzezinski talks of the Soviet Union's "vitriolic worldwide propaganda campaign against the United States...." This campaign of words may be as fearsome as Mr. Brzezinski says it is. But we might recall the old childhood ditty: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." We may not like what the Soviets are saying about our capitalistic system, but doubtless they are not entirely enthusiastic either as we inveigh against the "brutal, Godless communists." On the whole, I think we are doing fairly well in the propaganda competition.

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Mr. Brzezinski speaks of the Soviet drive "to encircle and penetrate the Middle East...." But Soviet power and prestige in the Middle East is on the decline. Indeed, the Soviet Union has been largely squeezed out of the Middle East — especially from Egypt, the major Arab military power. It enjoys neither power nor influence in Iran, Israel or Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Brzezinski speaks of Soviet efforts "to stir up racial difficulties in Africa, and to make more difficult a moderate solution of these difficulties...."

It may well be that the Soviets are fishing in the troubled waters of Africa. But does anyone seriously believe that the Russians introduced racism to Africa or even that they are a major cause of the racial tension that marks that former domain of the white European colonizers?

It is, in any event, preposterous to assume that the African states struggling to be born represent fundamental security concerns for the United States simply because a few of them have the support of Cuba or Moscow. There has been no fundamental American interest threatened by anything either the Cubans or the Soviets have done or are likely to do in Africa. We might prefer that Ethiopia and Angola not have Marxist governments, but the fact that they do is an inconsequential threat to us and there is little we can do about it in any event.

There are said to be 30,000 Cubans in Africa — a vast continent of 300 million people. Anyone who assumes that 30,000 Cubans can impose their will on 300 million Africans should recall that even with 550,000 American forces and history's most murderous bombing, we failed to impose our will on 40 million Vietnamese. It is the sobering memory of that failure that has prompted several congressional restraints designed to prevent U. S. involvement in Vietnam-type conflicts in Africa or elsewhere without congressional approval. Mr. Brzezinski does not like these congressional safeguards. But they would cheer the hearts of our founding fathers and they reassure millions of Americans today.

Is there any reason to believe that the Russians and Cubans will be any more successful in colonizing the troubled and fractured African continent than were the French, the Dutch, the English, the Portuguese, the Belgians, the Germans and all others who were driven out by the still rising tide of African nationalism? If we really wanted to place a crushing burden on the Russians, we might ask them to pick up "the White Man's burden" in Africa laid down so recently and so painfully by the Europeans!!

While Mr. Brzezinski is wringing his hands over alleged Soviet and Cuban misbehaviour in Africa, he might do well to recall that nothing the Soviets or Cubans are doing in Africa, the Middle East, Asia or Europe can approach the calamity we perpetrated for so many years in Indochina. But even more crucial than recalling the mistakes of the past is the avoidance of needless tragedy in the future. That is why we must nurture the hope of detente and the necessity of arms control. Detente does not mean that the Soviets will not continue to be rivals of ours for influence and ideological propagation. Nor is detente any guarantee that the Soviets will cease what Mr. Brzezinski has described as a "shortsighted attempt to exploit global difficulties." Detente does not even mean that the United States will refrain from exploiting opportunities for advantage over our Soviet rivals. Detente means simply that as rival powers there are a few areas such as arms control to avoid mutual extinction and retarding nuclear weapons proliferation where the United States and the Soviet Union have mutual interests.

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We would be better advised to see the Russians as our fellow residents on this planet that lives in the shadow of a nuclear Armageddon. We need not love the Russians nor even admire them — nor they us — to know that the alternative to arms control and detente is the bankruptcy and death of civilization.

These later views are, I believe, close to the views of Secretary Vance, Mr. Warnke and Ambassador Young. They are, I believe, the instinctive views of President Carter. They are not, apparently, the views of Mr. Brzezinski.

It would appear that as of the moment we do not have a coherent foreign policy, but a collection of conflicting voices. Perhaps that tendency is always present in a pluralistic society. In any event, I pray that in the contest for the mind of the President, calm and common sense will prevail over the strategy of crisis and confrontation.

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