

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

DAVID HUNTER MILLER

WEIGHED in the balance and found wanting is the verdict of this prominent Democrat with regard to the foreign policy of the present administration. Mr. Coolidge's declaration in October, 1920, that "America must throw her great weight on the side of such an association of nations as will best promote a durable peace" has not been acted upon. Mr. Miller refers to the episode of the World Court as a shining example of political betrayal on the part of the present Republican administration.

ANY discussion of the foreign policy of the present administration may well begin with recalling the promises and the pledges on which that policy was founded. It moves one to laughter and to tears to remember that in 1920 votes were asked and obtained for the present administration, for Mr. Harding and for Mr. Coolidge, on the promise that our foreign policy would be decided after consultation and discussion with "the best minds". A more tragic joke was never put over and across the American people. Among those "best minds" are three of the most discredited individuals known to American public life: Albert B. Fall, who refused to testify before a Senate committee on the ground that it might incriminate him; Edward Denby, who resigned after his removal from office had been asked by a Republican Senate; and H. M. Daugherty, who is so distrusted by the President, by the Congress, and by everybody else, that he was not permitted to jeopardize the oil scandal litigation by having anything to do with it.

Of course, it is Mr. Hughes, and none of those three men, who has been Secretary of State since 1921; but we must remember, — and be sorry for Mr. Hughes because of it, — that those three men were the intimate official associates of Mr. Hughes; they sat with him in the Cabinet when the foreign policy of the United States was considered and decided; two of them were close personal friends of President Harding, while Mr. Hughes was not; the views of those three men had weight with President Harding; indeed we know that Mr. Fall of present oil memory, was thought of by President Harding for Secretary of State; so it may well be that in the councils of the Cabinet, the views of that Mr. Fall

may have at times outweighed the opinions of his colleague Mr. Hughes with their common chief, President Harding.

However this may be, we may at least conjecture, in reflecting upon the record of Mr. Hughes as Secretary of State, that these three official associates of his were responsible for some of the difficulties which Mr. Hughes, himself an honest and in some respects a very able man, doubtless faced in the Cabinet under President Harding.

I do not like to quote from my own utterances. This is one of the few occasions, I think, which would justify such a procedure. In May, 1921, I was trying, in the course of some remarks about the present administration, to say something complimentary regarding Mr. Hoover, and what I said was this:

"Mr. Hoover is one of the two really able men in the Cabinet . . . The only thing against Mr. Hoover is that he has fallen into bad company. His associates are not such as I would choose for him."

Those were truer words than I thought at the time, and it is with regret that we must think of them as applicable also to the Secretary of State.

The ultimate aim of the foreign policy of the United States is the preservation of world peace. This means not only a world in which the United States is not at war, but a world in which all nations are at peace, a world of coöperation among all the peoples, unhampered by aggression or by imperialism on the part of any. This can certainly not be disputed by any defender of the present administration. It is only necessary for me to quote in this connection from the first and last portions of the Republican platform plank in 1920:

" . . . We believe that such an international association must be based upon international justice and must provide methods which shall maintain the rule of public right by development of law and the decision of impartial courts and which shall secure instant and general international conference whenever peace shall be threatened by political action, so that the nations pledged to do and insist upon what is just and fair may exercise their influence and power for the prevention of war."

" . . . we pledge the coming Republican Administration to such agreement with the other nations of the world as shall meet the full duty of America to civilization and humanity in accordance with American ideals and without surrendering the right of the American people to exercise its judgment and its power in favor of justice and peace."

Strange as it may now seem, there were people in 1920 who believed these words. Most famous of these believers were "the thirty-one," including Mr. Hoover and Mr. Hughes, who signed the celebrated declaration of October, 1920, in which they said, among other things:

"The contest is not about the principle of the league of nations, but it is about the method of most effectively applying that principle to preserve peace."

And these thirty-one signers concluded their declaration in the following language:

"We therefore believe that we can most effectively advance the cause of international coöperation to promote peace by supporting Mr. Harding for election to the presidency."

Mr. Coolidge, then Governor of Massachusetts, in his speech reported in "The New York Times" of October 29, 1920, after speaking of the possibility of amendment of the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League, is quoted as follows:

"The platform and candidate do not limit themselves to that. They do agree to act. America must throw her great weight on the side of such an association of nations as will best promote a durable peace."

Such were some of the promises and pledges upon which and because of which the present administration came into power. More of them could be quoted, but it seems hardly worth while.

What are we to say as to performance? We can answer most appropriately in the biting words of George Harvey, who had a good deal to say about our foreign policy at one time and another, and who said at his farewell dinner in London last October: "The national American foreign policy is to have no foreign policy." In their application to the present administration, no words could be more appropriate or more crushing.

My basic criticism of the foreign policy of this administration is not primarily a criticism of a policy of isolation; the question is not between a policy of isolation and a policy of coöperation; for the officially declared and proclaimed policy of the Republican Party, as I have shown, is the latter policy; and the basic criticism of the Republican Party rests upon the fact that its promises and pledges were lying promises and false pledges, made for the ear and broken to the hope, soft words easily spoken to obtain

power, and forgotten and betrayed for political reasons, and for those political reasons only.

The episode of the World Court is a shining example of this kind of political betrayal. I do not mean to intimate that Mr. Hughes did not make a sincere effort to take some step forward when he made his proposals for joining the World Court in February, 1923, for I think he did. His plan had been carefully worked out and it was a proper and just plan.

Mr. Harding submitted this plan to the Senate on February 24, 1923, eight days before that session of Congress by law was to end and at a time when he knew and everyone else knew that consideration of the matter by the Senate at that session presented great difficulty. That difficulty became an impossibility, and what caused the impossibility was simply the attitude of the Republicans in the Senate who refused, although requested by the Democratic minority, to proceed with the consideration of the proposal.

The next political step was taken by Mr. Harding in June, 1923, when in a speech at St. Louis he publicly threw over the carefully thought out plan of his Secretary of State, proposed conditions that he must have known made the whole matter an utter impossibility, and incidentally humiliated Mr. Hughes by putting forth arguments which were directly contradictory to those used by Mr. Hughes in a speech made a few weeks earlier before the American Society of International Law.

The next and final political step in this matter of the World Court was taken when Mr. Coolidge, in his message to Congress of last December, gave the project two paragraphs of mention and approval in principle, while at the same time letting it be known that the influence of the administration would not be exerted even to secure consideration and discussion of the matter at this session of Congress. That is the last we may expect to hear of the World Court from the Republican Party, with the possible exception of some equivocal and vague reference to it in their next platform, combining in the same soothing words expressions which may be read as in favor of the project of Mr. Hughes, but which also may be thought to approve the later and contradictory ideas of Mr. Harding, and at the same time not to run counter to the views of the avowed isolationists such as Mr. Fall.

In one of the speeches of Mr. Hughes, he expressed a wish that the foreign policy of the United States might be considered from a non-partisan point of view. I charge that under this administration the foreign policy of the United States has been conducted from the point of view of partisan benefit and political results at home. Let me give one more instance of this: in December, 1922, President Harding wrote a letter to Senator Lodge complaining of the fact that he had not received from Congress authority to appoint an American member of the Reparation Commission. Thereupon there was introduced into the Senate by Senator Robinson, the Democratic leader, a resolution granting that authority, a resolution, moreover, which did not direct or attempt to compel the President to do anything, but which simply gave to him the privilege of appointing or not appointing an American member of the Reparation Commission, as he saw fit. That resolution, by direction of the administration, was smothered in the committee of a Republican Senate solely for the reason that it was introduced into the Senate by a Democrat; the Republicans thought that it would never do to let pass a resolution relating to foreign policy if that resolution bore the name of a Democratic Senator.

Perhaps we shall be told that the Republican Party redeemed, or at least attempted to redeem, some of its pledges by the Washington conference. Properly speaking, that conference had very little direct relation to the question of world peace. It treated of a field so limited as to be insignificant in comparison. However, it is only fair that the Washington conference should be judged by its own results.

From every point of view those results are insignificant. It may be that they included some slight reduction of the naval budgets of two or three powers, our own included; but there was no reduction in the competition of naval armament, even among the powers represented at Washington. The result of that conference was merely a transfer of the competition from one form of armament to another, from capital ships to other ships, and from ships to aircraft.

In two respects indeed the Washington conference has furnished a lesson as to how international affairs should not be conducted. The conference was carried on with a combination of

secret negotiations, with what a French critic has cuttingly called "megaphone diplomacy."

Indeed, the confusion about the meaning of the Four-Power Treaty was such that there was appended to that Treaty a declaration regarding its meaning, signed on the same day, then a further treaty, still further defining its meaning, signed a few weeks later, and, in addition to these, there was a reservation adopted by the Senate reciting the understanding of the United States regarding the Treaty, the whole making it almost impossible for any one to say now with confidence just what the intention of the parties may be. Certainly the myth that the Washington conference removed any threatened danger of a future war is now no longer taken seriously by any intelligent person.

The other lesson to be drawn from the lack of results of the Washington conference is this: the conference proceeded on a false basis; it was not recognized that all these questions that involve peace and war, including disarmament, are questions of world concern and not questions for a few powers only. The annihilation of distances by modern science makes this conclusion an inevitable reality.

The futility of the attempt of the Washington conference to localize questions of the Pacific by drawing an arbitrary and imaginary line on the map, was shown by the immediate project of the British to build a great naval base at Singapore, just over that line; and was also shown by the Dutch proposals for an increase of their naval forces.

No real progress in international affairs in their large sense can be achieved until the principle of Woodrow Wilson is accepted, the principle that the problem of world peace is a world problem, to be dealt with by all the world.

I have mentioned the broader and more important aspects of our foreign policy under the Republican administration. There are others of less consequence. In some questions, the lead of the Wilson administration has been followed. These include the negotiations regarding Yap and other areas under mandates; the ratification of the treaty with Colombia where the previous Republican attitude was reversed, for reasons not yet, perhaps, fully disclosed; the Mexican policy, which remained for more than two years that of non-recognition of the Mexican Gov-

ernment; and our relations with Russia, which are unchanged.

But in none of these questions, or in any other, is there any record of real achievement; and in some there is the contrary. The Pan-American Conference at Santiago was more than a failure, for it left Latin-American relations worse than they had been before; we have had no constructive suggestion regarding the traffic in arms with backward countries, but only a *non-possumus*; and we have had offered to us by the administration the humiliating Turkish Treaty.

These, however, are minor blots on the record. The chief blot is that the foreign policy of this administration has been a failure and a shame to America.

Oil and water do not mix. Neither have the expressed desires and hopes of Mr. Hughes fused with the partisan ambitions and personal aspirations of his colleagues and his chiefs.

The writing is written on the wall:

"WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE AND FOUND WANTING."

DOMESTIC POLICY FIRST!

GEORGE HENRY PAYNE

SO busily are the leaders of the Republican Party engaged in dodging missiles at home that they haven't time just now to take on the additional worries of a foreign policy. If there is to be an effective Republican opposition to the Democratic forces in the coming election, the leaders of the Party must first contrive to bring it into the court of public opinion with clean hands. It is doubtful whether any plank will be formulated until the Republican leaders come together in the Convention at Cleveland on June 10th.

THE only difficulty in defining the Republican position in the matter of the League of Nations and foreign affairs generally, is the extreme indefiniteness of that position. Two years ago the Republican position was strongly anti-League of Nations. Shortly before President Harding died, the Republican administration, in opposition to the views of most of the Senate leaders, took the position that the World

Court was a justifiable proposal from an anti-League of Nations party and succeeded in making within the party a great many