

# Looking Abroad

THERE IS no greater political issue in our days than the one about the nature and the limits of American power: should the Americans themselves, like many a foreigner, become so scared of its vastness as to wish for its retrenchment, or should its sustained growth be guided by aims that go well beyond national self-interest and could be truly called ethical? Certainly, the political conflict which is rending our country these days affects people all over the world. The core of this conflict lies in who shall prevail: those who, in America and abroad, are afraid of our power, or those who have militant faith in man's reason and charity.

True, from the time of the Declaration of Independence on, and most particularly since America assumed paramount responsibility in world affairs, there has never been any lack of moralism whenever this country's leaders addressed the rest of the world. A number of broad principles have been strongly patronized, each one recommended as a sure guideline to virtue. Nationalism is one of these principles, greatly helpful to countries that had to overcome the handicap of youth or infancy. Pragmatism is a sure evidence of decency, whenever practiced by successors to dogmatic rulers. The eclectic sponsoring of these and many more principles, unaccompanied by definitions of the conditioning element that can make them operative, has not contributed to our international prestige.

Nor has our prestige been heightened by Americans who have adopted North Vietnamese nationalism. Citizens by the tens of thousands keep registering their opposition to the war in Vietnam by marching according to the design of nondescript leaders through the streets of great American cities. The marchers' pic-

tures, within a few hours, appear in newspapers and on TV screens all over the world. The politicians determined to grab power by all possible means know that the relevance of domestic events is determined not by the number of people involved but by their repercussions abroad. Then the battle for one man, one vote can be resumed.

WHAT this all means is not lost on Lyndon Johnson. Since he assumed the Presidency he has come to learn that the distinction between international and domestic politics is to be observed mainly for purposes of bookkeeping, to keep some order in the expenditures of his own energies and of the nation's resources. In fact, he is sometimes inclined to offer foreign peoples prospects already difficult to attain here at home. He has voiced once more all the absolutes, each one considered as a cure-all in itself, that his predecessors and authoritative American publicists have advocated to the point of utter triteness: like nationalism—good for everybody but de Gaulle—pragmatism, common markets, larger and more perfect unions, and the like.

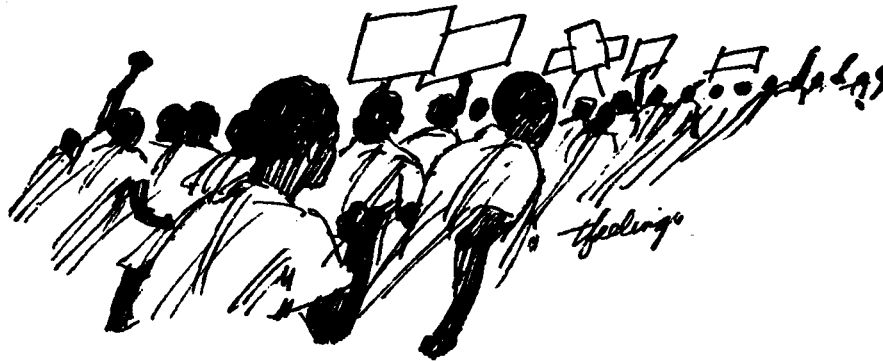
President Johnson's personality is expressed by what he does at the time he chooses and by his vigor in sustaining momentous decisions. It was exactly two years ago that the Marines landed in Santo Domingo. The governments of at least five Latin-American nations—Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, and Uruguay—publicly and solemnly deplored the President's action. Now the whole thing, messy and untidy as it was, is well over, and there was no trace of any anti-Johnson resentment at Punta del Este.

The President there achieved a success of which the causes and the extent are difficult to grasp. He gave

strong support to the common market idea, but did not neglect to stress the conditioning element essential for achieving any measure of success. The task, with all the work and sacrifice it involves, belongs to the Latin-Americans themselves. This country can offer assistance, but in a modest way, without any notion of a new Marshall Plan or any advice on internal reforms to countries most of which are graveyards of reform. All the Presidents in attendance, including ours, refrained from anti-Communist tirades. Too many anti-Communist declamations and resolutions have poured out at the Pan-American meetings in the recent past. The President, his exuberance restrained by the sense of the occasion, was just himself: a man, not a symbol.

IT WAS the same, in an entirely different setting, when he went to Manila. There the enemy was closer at hand, the participating nations were stirred by different degrees of belligerency and, most important of all, knew that they had to represent much larger Asian nations whose voices could not be heard. At both gatherings Lyndon Johnson testified to a fundamental fact: an American President in our days, to exert his power fully, must have large constituencies in foreign lands.

By lending his presence, by timely acting whenever action is demanded, Lyndon Johnson does what any one man can do to counteract the mischievous misconceptions about our country's power. But there are other areas of great and present peril—our relationships with Europe and with the more or less divided Communist world—that demand a thorough re-evaluation of our policies. The President has given just a hint of his concern by his attendance at the funeral of Konrad Adenauer.



# Vorster's Practical Approach

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CAPE TOWN  
SOUTH AFRICA, after nineteen years of isolation from the rest of the world and of studied defiance of it, has initiated a sudden and dramatic change of policy. The Republic is embarking upon a major attempt to improve its world image, to make peace with independent black Africa as well as with members of the western camp antagonistic toward it.

The Nationalist government under Prime Minister B. J. Vorster, believing that this can be achieved if certain adjustments are made, has already undertaken some startling initiatives. Negro statesmen have been lavishly wined and dined by Vorster and his cabinet, feelers are out for a program of diplomatic and economic contact with black Africa to the north, and the Prime Minister has announced that the government would allow a multi-racial team to represent the country next year at the Olympics, from which South Africa was excluded in 1964.

All this represents the first hint of any change whatsoever that has come from within South Africa since the Nationalists came to power in 1948, and, however fragile it might seem to a skeptical outside world, domestically the impact has been considerable. Ideas are ex-

pounded that were unthinkable eight months ago, before the assassination of Vorster's predecessor, Hendrik Verwoerd, on the floor of Parliament. South Africa is not a changed country, but the official mood is vastly different from what it was.

## Strength and Confidence

The search for a *modus vivendi* with black Africa is the facet of South African policy to which the government is now most strenuously dedicated. To win the world's understanding, it must win Africa's. The reasoning here is that South Africa, so rich, so much more complex industrially and more technically advanced than any other country in Africa, is the one best qualified by experience to offer advice and assistance to its emerging neighbors.

There is nothing really new about this. South Africa has always been the subcontinental leader, and its educators, agriculturists, conservationists, engineers, and medical men have left a considerable mark on most of the countries beyond it. South African trade with the north was huge. But contact was diminished by the spread of independence and the hostility of the new states to apartheid—though a considerable amount of undercover economic ac-

tivity persisted despite the lip service to boycotts. The total separation of white and black Africa had become an accepted fact, and no one had really looked for change on either side.

Several factors account for this Nationalist diplomatic venture, but most notably the immense confidence now felt throughout this country as its remarkable boom and prosperity continue. South Africans feel a great sense of power. The Rhodesian crisis has proved to them the ineffectuality of the United Nations, and they survey a political scene in which all opposition has been reduced to negligible proportions. They can afford to be magnanimous, to look outward and away.

Aside from Vorster's unexpected pragmatism, the most powerful direct influence has been the granting of independence to the two former British protectorates of Bechuanaland and Basutoland (now Botswana and Lesotho), which brought an unprecedented intimacy with black leaders. Both Pretoria and the new states had long since recognized the advantages of a cordial relationship, and South Africa not only gave every facility to black statesmen passing through Johannesburg to the independence celebrations—Lesotho being entirely surrounded by