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# POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON US INTERVENTION IN LOW-INTENSITY CONFLICTS

by

DAVID W. TARR

The phrase "low-intensity conflict" suggests a concept of warfare based upon a scale ranging from low-, through intermediate-, to high-intensity conflict. By focusing upon the lower end of that scale, we presumably rule out major warfare, whether conventional or nuclear. Most analysts agree that the expected frequency of low-intensity conflict is high and that the locations of such small wars or insurgencies will be unevenly distributed, with fewer outbreaks in the advanced industrial countries and most in the less-developed Third World countries. While such expectations may not be confirmed by experience in the 1980's, they are nonetheless reasonable predictions based on the record of the past two decades.

Wherever the location and whatever the frequency of such events, it is obvious that the United States, as a major power with global interests and objectives, must be prepared for such contingencies, both in terms of the political criteria which determine whether American interests are at stake and in terms of the capabilities necessary to undertake military action suitable to low-intensity circumstances. Generally, it has been official policy for the Department of Defense to prepare for these "limited wars"—wars of more modest scope, objectives, and intensity than a major confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. In recent years the official planning formula of the Defense Department

has been to be prepared to fight, simultaneously, one and a half wars (a reduction from the two and a half wars postulated in the 1960's). The "half-a-war" concept includes those types of conflict the Pentagon currently refers to as "limited contingencies," requiring the rapid deployment of small units, perhaps without access to prepositioned equipment; readily available overseas bases; and often overflight rights.<sup>1</sup> Given the decline in numbers of American armed forces deployed abroad, the shrinking base structure, fewer forces in being, and increased reliance on weapon modernization and preparation for high-intensity warfare, sudden American involvement in a low-intensity conflict at a distant location may seriously stress American military capabilities.

But a discussion of military capabilities and tactics is beyond the scope of this article. I mean only to define here my concept of what low-intensity conflict entails. There are at least two general categories of low-intensity conflict in which American military power might be committed to combat (that is, the actual use of force, rather than "show the flag" operations). The first is the "rescue mission." Within this category two possibilities come to mind: the insertion of American armed forces to rescue beleaguered US (or other) citizens caught up in civil strife and in mortal danger; and anti-terrorist operations to rescue hostages, to prevent the

destruction of valued facilities or resources, or to recover such entities from terrorists.

The second type of limited contingency might be labeled the "military incursion." The numerous possibilities in this category can be reduced to three types: seizure or protection of important assets that are threatened or held by hostile military forces; intervention in a civil war, rebellion, or coup, either to separate the parties or to support one side; and commitment of US combat forces to repel an invasion. Any of these actions, particularly the last, might escalate beyond the confines of those stipulated above for low-intensity conflict. But most of these situations would probably begin in low-intensity circumstances, under which the American application of armed force would be strictly limited in numbers of combat personnel and types of weapons to the smallest application of force consistent with the assigned military objectives.

The question addressed here is, What political constraints operate on our decisionmakers in low-intensity conflicts? It is important to note that almost all of the contingencies discussed above postulate American military intervention in events abroad. While other nations may be susceptible to attacks on their borders or the eruption of internal warfare, the United States is unlikely to experience either. Its borders are among the most secure, and its susceptibility to major internal upheaval is relatively low. In short, a discussion of American low-intensity conflict policy and posture concerns the projection of American military power abroad—that is, intervention. The United States will have a choice—to intervene or not. What are the constraints and limitations on such American policy decisions?

#### NORMATIVE RESTRAINTS ON INTERVENTION

The word "intervention" is, in international parlance, often taken pejoratively. In contrast to self-defense, military intervention requires special moral and legal justification to be acceptable to

domestic constituencies and the international community. Otherwise, the interventionist forces may be regarded as unreasonably imposing their will on people beyond their dominion. A number of scholars have expressed the belief that normative restraints have been growing, at least in the West and possibly beyond, by the "Europeanization" of international norms; this process, now embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, has reached significant levels.<sup>2</sup> In terms of both law and opinion, the use of force by one state against another was generally regarded before this century as an expected and often legitimate enterprise. Force was an instrument of state policy, and its use, even for what might now be called aggressive purposes, had the sanction of the "laws of war" so long as the conduct of such wars fell within norms.

A growing revulsion against the use of force can be traced back at least to the carnage of World War I, as Klaus Knorr observed in his essay on the subject.<sup>3</sup> The war-guilt clause in the Treaty of Versailles; the creation of the League of Nations; the

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Kellogg-Briand Pact; and, after the trauma of World War II, the war-crimes trials and the establishment of the United Nations—all may be regarded as evidence of significant erosion in the legitimacy of resort to force. This process has doubtless been furthered by the publicity attendant upon more recent wars, especially with regard to the American involvement in the Southeast Asian conflict of the 1960's and early 1970's. Television, with its instantaneous global communication of the sights and sounds of battle, is a modern phenomenon of enormous impact, largely negative, especially with respect to the use of force by a great power against lesser ones. The world's reaction to the Soviets' invasion of Afghanistan is a case in point. In this century, the communication of the horrors of war by picture has probably been as important a factor as any in buttressing anti-militarism and anti-war sentiment.

Another factor deemed significant by a number of scholars is the possibility that industrial states have become more introspective as they progressed toward more popular and responsive forms of government, and as their people became more affluent, literate, and educated. According to this view, the "low politics" of social welfare issues became more salient while the "high politics" of international affairs became less so as domestic constituencies grew resistant to the hardships and sacrifices entailed by military conflict. Military institutions and initiatives became less revered and were often opposed by competing domestic demands. Thus, the military bureaucracy came to be rivaled by the growth of welfare state bureaucracies. In short, the development of politicized populations and more internally oriented governments with greater domestic responsibilities, both social and economic, is thought to have furthered the shift in popular attitudes against militarism and war.

Of course, as Klaus Knorr has observed, while normative restraints are probably increasing, they are distributed unevenly, having greater effect on the industrialized West than on other regions of the world. Knorr has also argued that the erosion in the legitimacy of war applies only to aggression, not to enterprises regarded as either defense

against aggression or "liberation of oppressed peoples."<sup>4</sup>

The cynic will point out the futility of attempting to define either "aggression" or "wars of liberation" in terms that meet universal acceptance, arguing, no doubt, that it depends on whose ox is being gored. Yet, in these days of instant global communication, the labeling of events has become a significant part of the process of international and national restraint. Domestic political constituencies and the international community actively engage in the normative labeling of military conflicts, and the impact of such labeling can be enormous. If domestic political constituencies reach the verdict that an American ally is the victim of "aggression," for example, support for an American military response is likely to be high indeed, even if communist or Third World spokesmen claim the American response is "aggressive." On the other hand, if elites in the United States and among Western allies label a Third World low-intensity conflict as a struggle for self-determination or independence, the opposite is the case.<sup>5</sup> In that event, normative constraints will be strong, and a military response aimed at squelching the "liberation" is likely to be subjected to widespread international disapprobation.

**I**n the event of flagrant aggression, where a nation is subjected to an overt invasion by the armed forces of another state, as in the recent case of Afghanistan, self-righteous claims by the invading state will not likely carry credibility among the political elites of the world—and rapid communication may make it impossible for political subterfuge to have much effect. But the very fact of the illegitimacy of the "aggressive" use of force today undoubtedly motivates the "aggressor" to resort to any of a variety of indirections, such as proxy actions or prolonged provocations, that produce the desired result of having the defenders undertake the actual or at least visible "first use" of armed force. Both sides can then charge "aggression."

In this connection, recall the earlier

observation that intervention is widely regarded as a pejorative term and that most of the low-intensity contingencies in which American military force might be applied are likely to be labeled military interventions. Although the negative moral connotations of "intervention" are not as serious as those associated with "aggression," any American intervention will have to be convincingly justified at the outset, or public support for it will likely erode, especially in view of the expected onslaught of criticism from unsympathetic communist and Third World sources. Further, since all parties to the conflict will be motivated to claim legitimacy on the basis of charges of aggression or claims of liberation, and since the publicity attendant upon American participation in the conflict is likely to be substantial,<sup>6</sup> persuasive justification by spokesmen of the American government will doubtless be most difficult.

Even if conditions are right and the use of force by the United States is not likely to result in wholesale charges of aggression outside the communist bloc, the United States might be saddled with a further normative burden in the form of the "underdog phenomenon." As one of the Goliaths, US military actions may engender sympathy for our smaller opponents, the Davids of the world.<sup>7</sup> Quite apart from the question of the capacity of large states to use force effectively against small ones is the problem of "dual morality." Powerful states are expected to act with greater restraint than are the less powerful. This expectation may indeed range across the spectrum of conflict. For example, the tactics of Khomeini in present-day Iran may be widely condemned, but they do receive some international support; however, such tactics are unthinkable on the part of the government of the United States. By the same token, the Palestine Liberation Organization can openly admit to terrorist tactics, Cuba can export its troops to Africa on behalf of Soviet interests, and these actions still receive some support from elites not only in the Third World and the East, but in the West as well. In part, such support may have an ideological basis ("liberation"), but it is also possible that the less powerful are sometimes

forgiven their excesses, that their actions attract less unfavorable attention, and that others expect less "responsible" behavior of them.

Whatever the reasons, the extreme attentiveness of the world to American military actions, the higher expectations of morally acceptable behavior on the part of the United States, and the development of sympathy for underdogs generate substantial normative restraints upon American intervention in low-intensity conflict situations. American political leaders seem generally aware of the need to articulate morally compelling reasons when intervention is contemplated or undertaken, for they obviously want both international and domestic support and minimal opposition.

#### NATIONAL VALUES AND INTERVENTION

All of these normative restraints play heavily upon the foreign policy leadership of the United States. Americans tend to demand or expect that US foreign policies be based on sound moral principles. Much has been written on this subject. "Realists," for example, have been especially critical of the alleged propensity toward excessive moralism and legalism in American foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> Since the days of De Tocqueville, many foreign observers have noted, often critically, the moralistic overtones of American political attitudes. A more recent French commentator, Raymond Aron, has detected a contradictory impulse in America, "the urge to power and moralism," which has been manifest in American foreign policy since the founding of the republic.<sup>9</sup> Many observers have noted, often with distress, the tendency of American policy to swing back and forth between idealistic crusades and isolation tinged with disillusionment.

In the same vein, Stanley Hoffmann presents a more complex analysis of America's style. In particular he detects a tendency toward "moral imperatives" in American foreign policy, of which two are of special relevance to this discussion: "the

principle of self-determination” and “the principle according to which no changes in the status quo should be perpetrated by force” (or the principle of peaceful change).<sup>10</sup> In both cases, Hoffmann finds a basic problem in application of the principle, and certainly the two could clash when “self-determination” is sought by means of force.

Whether moral principles have actually guided American foreign policy or have served, as some critics have argued, as window dressing for baser motives is beside the point. We are not even concerned here with what role, if any, such principles should play in US foreign policy. It seems sufficiently evident, empirically, that such values have concerned American political leaders, whether they have regarded themselves as pursuing the realpolitik of Nixon and Kissinger or the human rights principles of Carter. The Truman Doctrine masked an unpopular policy, “containment,” in a popular one: assistance to “free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.” Lyndon Johnson similarly defended his decision to intervene more forcefully in the war in Vietnam. But virtually all presidents and secretaries of state have associated American foreign policies with a consistent pattern of moral principles that serve to rationalize and justify US foreign policy behavior. Detractors may say that such language has been used to engender public support for actions otherwise not entirely supportable. Others may argue that such principles have, in fact, been the naive quirks of our leadership and have led us astray. Still others may say we have betrayed our principles and should return to them. But whatever the case, the values at issue obviously play a significant role in expanding or contracting the restraints on the alternatives available to American decisionmakers.

**W**hat have been the rationales in recent history for the actual forcible intervention by the United States in conflicts abroad? What values must be served—or at least addressed—as justifications? What must be avoided—that is, what values proscribe the resort to force?

Herbert J. Tillema’s book, *Appeal to Force*, conveniently summarizes the major national values that militate for and against the resort to force. Tillema cites a basic ambivalence, founded in the Judeo-Christian tradition, that force is sometimes morally wrong and at other times justifiable; it is “immoral because of the death and destruction that will result,” and yet it is sometimes morally justified when used in self-defense or in the defense of others. He reduces to three the justifications necessary for American leaders to resort to force: there must be a “deadly conflict going on that should end”; the host country’s government must request US intervention; and some “outside nation” must have already intervened. According to Tillema’s theory, all three of these justifications must be present or overt military intervention should not occur.<sup>11</sup>

If we incorporate these rules with the other normative restraints already discussed, it seems that there is some consensus among the observers cited of the central constraining values that must be invoked to legitimize American military interventions: furtherance of self-determination; opposition to aggression; protection of the principle of peaceful change; and legality of the intervention, as provided by an invitation from the authority in power.

It is hardly surprising, then, that most observers find a connection between these basic values and the Cold War moral imperative—oppose the “communist threat.” During the height of the Cold War, Americans tended to perceive the communist threat as endangering these central principles. Communism seemed to achieve power only through violence, not by peaceful political processes. It appeared to extend its power by aggression—both direct, as in Korea, and indirect, through the subversive activities of its agents. It seemed to make a mockery of the principle of self-determination, and, by extension, of democracy itself. In short, from the American moral perspective, communism was aggressive, violent, illegal, and undemocratic.

But perceptions shift. With the development of efforts at “peaceful

coexistence" and "detente," with the shift in China's alignment from anti-American to anti-Soviet, with the failure of the American enterprise in Southeast Asia, and with the rise of "Eurocommunism," the American perception of the "communist threat" was bound to alter somewhat.

The greatest catalyst for change, no doubt, was the disillusioning experience of the Vietnam War. All the salient principles discussed here were invoked in the attempt to legitimize American participation in that conflict. Citizens at home argued while soldiers abroad fought and died for those principles. In the end, the whole shaky venture collapsed. Subsequently, there developed a strong consensus that American participation in the Vietnam War was not only a mistake, but was also fundamentally wrong and immoral. Of the respondents in a 1978 public opinion poll sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 72 percent agreed with that appraisal, 47 percent of them strongly, while only seven percent disagreed.<sup>12</sup> Although by itself the result is hardly conclusive evidence of a changed perception, in the context of other results from that poll, the editor found it reasonable to conclude that "both the public and the leaders displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the role of communism and communist governments in the world today." Although concerned about growing Soviet power, "both groups were less concerned about the role of a communist government in China or the possibility of communist governments coming to power through elections in Western Europe."<sup>13</sup>

One might draw two tentative conclusions from this. First, the Vietnam War experience seriously tarnished the "communist threat" rationale as a legitimizing symbol for American military interventions in the Third World. Second, the public may be beginning to discern a difference between the ideological issues associated with the "communist threat" and the military dangers of the "Soviet threat." If the ideological dimension is subsiding, or at least becoming more complex, the requirements for legitimizing future

American military interventions will change. One might suppose that an alleged "communist threat" would no longer be a sufficient rationale. Will the underlying principles of furtherance of self-determination, defense against aggression, and opposition to violent change remain as moral restraints? Presumably they will, and as such they may function as fairly strong curbs against unilateral American responses to low-intensity conflicts.

While the East-West ideological division will continue, the structure and distribution of power in the world today suggest the further growth of independent centers of decisionmaking, aligned in multidimensional ways. Fewer issues leading to conflict are likely to relate directly to an East vs. West, "bad guys" vs. "good guys" dichotomy comparable to that of the simpler Cold War period. Thus, again, the "communist threat" alone may in many cases be an inappropriate basis for American military interventions.

#### OTHER CONSTRAINTS

Normative constraints based on underlying political and moral perspectives probably change slowly, and there are other constraints that should at least be touched upon. For example, how is a decision to intervene processed through the political system? Does it make any difference how the issue arises and what the nature of the problem is? What role does public opinion play? What effect does electoral politics have?

Let us look first at the patterns by which such issues are processed. Many foreign policy problems are not identified as such until government spokesmen say they are. A classic case of improper issue definition was the announcement last year, through Senator Frank Church, of the presence of a Soviet military brigade in Cuba. When a "problem" is so identified, the impression is immediately given that something will be done to solve it. As a general rule, it would be imprudent in international affairs to admit that a problem exists, if one can avoid it, until one is prepared to act. Thus, for example, the State

Department persisted in denying that there were North Vietnamese troops in Cambodia in 1966—even though there was ample evidence to the contrary—because the United States was not prepared to do anything about it and did not want to encourage pressure for an American response.<sup>14</sup> Perhaps the most celebrated instance of controlling information pending readiness was the Cuban missile crisis of 1962.

Of course, not all problem processing is within the control of US policymakers. Crises often take the leadership by surprise, even if there is forewarning, as was the case with the attack on South Korea in 1950, or more recently the collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran. And often there is no warning whatever. In many cases the attendant publicity itself defines the issue in such a manner as to require an American response, such as the sudden construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 or the seizure of the US Embassy in Iran in late 1979. Thus, how the story emerges and develops has some effect on expectations for a response.

Moreover, the nature of the issue partly determines which organizations will be assigned responsibility for developing a response. The growing involvement of the United States in Vietnam from 1954 to 1964 is perhaps the classic case of incrementally growing US entanglement short of the use of force. Regardless of whether one subscribes to the "quagmire" explanation for the American involvement, it seems that every measure short of force—diplomatic initiatives by State, defense advisory efforts by Defense, economic assistance by the Agency for International Development—was tried first in Vietnam. Many of these programs did not receive much public attention or even critical congressional scrutiny, however.

The general course has been to defer decisions to use force as long as possible, and to "assign" the problem to one or several functional organizations—usually dealing with military assistance and foreign aid, as well as with specific regions or countries. The greater the sense of urgency, the more likely it is that the President and his top advisers will

become involved in reviewing the problem and deciding upon responses. Thus, crises may be thrust upon top decisionmakers, while other problems may be handled routinely within the bureaucracy—unless the President or another high official decides to make an issue out of something. One might have thought, for example, that the announced existence of the Soviet brigade in Cuba was of this latter variety. In short, the way in which problems are identified tends to determine how and at what level they are handled.

**W**hat about the restraints of public opinion? Although political leaders are clearly sensitive to this factor, most studies show that public opinion tends to react to international events, rather than to function as keenly felt pressure on policymakers. Again, it depends on the situation. Obviously, if there is time for opinion to be expressed and gauged, it will somehow make its weight felt. However, the system of making foreign policy tends to resist outside pressures.<sup>15</sup> As a result, public opinion, per se, is unlikely to function as a kind of "prior restraint" upon policymakers faced with an immediate crisis and serious consideration of military action. On the other hand, as may have been the case with the *Mayaguez* operation in 1975, pressure to act forcefully may be greater if previous setbacks have created a backlog of resentment, humiliation, or anger, or if the President is regarded as lacking in leadership or resolve.

In any case, public opinion tends to be regarded by policymakers as mercurial. Whatever the polls may show at any moment about levels of support for defense spending, foreign aid, international military involvement, and the like, the fact is that opinions are likely to fluctuate wildly in response to immediate international stimuli, regardless of contrary views solicited in the abstract. Thus, a finding that less than 50 percent of a national sample favor the use of US troops if the Soviets take West Berlin<sup>16</sup> would not likely deter a President faced with such a real-world crisis. Moreover, public opinion would doubtless flip-flop sharply in



the actual contingency. Public reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan illustrates the point clearly.

One of the most important phenomena in this regard is the tendency of the American public to "rally round the flag" in a crisis. As John E. Mueller has shown in *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (1973), a decision to resort to force is likely to result in a high initial level of support, but this support will probably decline as a function of the length and costs of the conflict.<sup>17</sup> Although decisions to use force abroad have been taken by every American President since Franklin D. Roosevelt, each leader and his advisers surely understood the inevitable controversy that would be raised by such actions. While each case is different, it is unlikely that concern over adverse public response will deter Presidents from decisions to undertake military action abroad. The circumstances that have led to such decisions have been regarded as too important to US security to give sway to the decision's expected effect on public opinion. In most cases, the influence of public reaction has been heavier in the *conduct* of these military actions than in the decisions themselves.

That is not an insignificant point, however. Presidents Truman and Johnson paid heavily for "their" wars. In 1973, the advisability of short wars was institutionalized in the War Powers Act, which requires termination of American interventions abroad in 60 to 90 days unless congressional authorization to continue combat operations is obtained. The common political wisdom derived from the lessons of Korea and Vietnam is clearly to avoid similar events in the future, and by all means to avoid *lengthy* military engagements. The trouble with hindsight, of course, is that it may not result in foresight.

Opinions generated by military interventions abroad might ultimately be translated into election results. The Tonkin Gulf decision undoubtedly enhanced Lyndon Johnson's position in the 1964 election, but the ensuing war did him in by 1968. Such lessons are not lost upon the next generation of politicians. They know that support for

such decisions is time- and result-sensitive. People rally around the President because "He's the only one we've got." But he is also the central figure to blame when things go wrong. Thus, the next military intervention by the United States is unlikely to resemble either the Korean example or that of Vietnam. The "never again" club has too many members.

Beneath the fickleness of today's opinions may lurk the deeper "moods" that fluctuate more slowly, perhaps owing to a kind of "imprinting," as Bruce Russett has put it, of a whole generation with the pivotal events of their time.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps Russett is right; perhaps we have seen a transition involving a "change of minds and change of bodies," in which the attitudes based on the experiences of World War II have been challenged and supplanted by those of a generation which does not even remember that war.<sup>19</sup> While some data of a recent opinion poll by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations suggest that Russett's 1975 conclusions concerning general attitudes toward security issues should be further qualified,<sup>20</sup> the underlying argument about generational changes in attitude is well taken. Moreover, for those of us who have had occasion to observe the passage of the Vietnam War generation to adulthood, there is clear evidence of the imprinting of that complex experience on their consciousness.

At any rate, opinions and moods are probably contextual but not central concerns of those who make major policy decisions. Once perceiving that a situation requires consideration of the use of force, they are most likely to be concerned about two interrelated elements: the nature of the problem and the capabilities at hand. Because uncertainty of consequences and a heightened sense of risk are likely under most circumstances of this type, the motivation to try something short of direct military intervention will be paramount. In this regard, the international constraints are reinforced by the domestic. External factors may make the problem seem intractable or susceptible to escalation and deeper, prolonged involvement. Domestic factors

will militate against actions that do not "solve" the problem within an acceptable time and at an acceptable cost. On the other hand, the proclivity for incremental actions, to avoid "biting the bullet," may lead to the very quagmire that no one wants to enter.

#### IN SUM

Although this essay touches upon a number of constraints that may operate in connection with intervention decisions in the United States, most of the emphasis has been on underlying values. This is so because the most significant and most consistent limitations on American decisions to resort to force are moral. These values are shared broadly and keenly felt.

During the height of the Cold War, these moral values were reinforced by the prevailing perception of the "communist threat." But that perception has changed. The era of containment is not over, but it has suffered attenuation. The underlying principle—the need to legitimize military action or to forswear it altogether—remains an important constraint. But experiences such as Vietnam may have produced changes in the operational definitions involved. Moreover, further experiences in the 1980's with issues of world order and non-communist threats to US interests are likely to result in acceptable, legitimate definitions of threat that do *not* require the label "communist."

I would also suggest, in reference to my typology of American military actions, that rescue operations will not in any case require an allegation of a communist threat or even of an ideological affinity with communism. Actions against terrorists are easily legitimized on the basis of our more traditional humanitarian moral principles. With respect to military incursions, on the other hand, the ideological factor probably remains an important constraint, especially with respect to issues that grow out of East-West tensions. But there are a number of possible low-intensity conflict situations which are unlikely to involve direct, or even indirect, communist threats, yet which could trigger an American military response within

our accepted moral framework—instances of aggression, violations of the principle of peaceful change, or conflicts over self-determination, for example.

In any case, the temper of the times has changed. Regardless of whether "mood theory" explains the shift, it seems apparent that to an important segment of Americans, attempts to legitimize policy by charging the existence of a "communist threat" will not work. For the Vietnam generation, intervention will need moral justification, but not solely in terms of anti-communism.

This does not mean that Americans will be insensitive to the "Soviet threat." Indeed, there was already clear evidence of growing concern on that issue, and broad support for defense measures to counter it, even before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As far as low-intensity conflicts are concerned, however, the desire to avoid direct confrontation will probably overrule any inclination toward overt counter-intervention to thwart Soviet actions, although that alternative cannot be ruled out. In any event, such a counter-intervention would be in response to a specific security threat such as endangerment of Western oil supplies, irrespective of communist ideology.

In short, in this post-Vietnam era, most actions contemplated by the political leadership, the bureaucrats, and the Congress will reflect the various "lessons" derived from that war. As Bernard Cohen once observed, the foreign policy system may have "mastered all the modes of resistance to outside opinion, [but] nevertheless seems from a long-run perspective to accommodate to it."<sup>21</sup> It appears that the system has in fact accommodated itself to the post-Vietnam mood.

Having stated this, however, it must also be said that the discernible shift in public mood in the wake of the seizure of the Embassy in Tehran and the invasion of Afghanistan suggests that the "Vietnam syndrome" of general opposition to military preparedness and action is now largely muted. The 1980's appear likely to be years in which American military strength will grow, and years in which the more traditional

sentiments of opposition to aggression on the one hand, and opposition to "unjustified" intervention on the other, will interact to form the basis for the political restraints of the era.

#### NOTES

1. *Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1980* (Washington: GPO, 1979), p. 202.
2. See e.g. F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1963).
3. Klaus Knorr, *On the Uses of Military Power in the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966); see especially chap. III.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
5. Incorporation of the phrase "wars of national liberation" into the lexicon of Western nations has unfortunate implications in terms of the specific distinction between that concept and the Western one of "self-determination."
6. American journalists are the most numerous in the world. Moreover, because the United States is a superpower and an open society, its actions are more closely observed and reported than those of any other state.
7. Klaus Knorr, pp. 74-79, also addresses this topic but in a different context.
8. The leading exponent of this view is Hans J. Morgenthau.
9. Raymond Aron, *The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World, 1945-1973*, trans. Frank Jellinek (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. xxxi.
10. Stanley Hoffmann, *Gulliver's Troubles, or the Setting of American Foreign Policy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 118.
11. Herbert J. Tillema, *Appeal to Force* (New York: Crowell, 1973), p. 34.
12. John E. Rielly, ed., *American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy, 1979* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1979), p. 27.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
14. For an interesting discussion of this subject, see "Why Statesmen Must Sometimes Lie in Order to Tell the Truth," in James L. Payne, *The American Threat* (Chicago: Markham, 1979), pp. 83-90.
15. Bernard C. Cohen, *The Public's Impact on Foreign Policy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973).
16. Rielly, p. 26.
17. John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley, 1973).
18. Bruce Russett, "The Americans' Retreat From World Power," *Political Science Quarterly*, 90 (Spring 1975), 11.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Rielly, *passim*.
21. Cohen, p. 205.

