
CONSTRUCTIVE CONTAINMENT

INTRODUCTION TO

“ALTERNATIVES TO MILITARY INTERVENTION”

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There are, essentially, three responses that can be made to any conflict: avoidance; intervention; or containment. In other words, one can simply avoid conflict, leaving its parties alone; one can intervene in a conflict, acting decisively to bring it to an end; or one can try to contain conflict, holding a ring around it so that others cannot intervene, and hope that it will, in time, burn itself out.

After the Cold War, a “New World Order” of international community-enforced stability seemed to be in the offing,¹ bringing with it enthusiasm for multilateral intervention. This impulse to engage in peacekeeping under the blue and white flag of the United Nations appears to have given way to conflict avoidance, a preference for withdrawing from dangerous situations abroad.² What Antonio Donini in this issue of *The Fletcher Forum* refers to as a New International Intervention Order (NIIO), or “Kouchner era,” may be turning into a New Order for Isolationist Retreat (NOIR), perhaps a “Helms era.”

In the United States—which so often has led the world community into action—the economic resources and political will needed for military-backed international intervention on behalf of “human rights,” “democratic freedoms,” or “good governance” simply are not forthcoming. Even U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, a man who does not give up easily, in effect has acknowledged, in part because of this hardening of the U.S. attitude, that “the new spirit of commonality” that existed earlier no longer is present.³ He has forlornly

¹ See, e.g., Alan K. Henrikson, *Defining a New World Order: Toward a Practical Vision of Collective Action for International Peace and Security* (Medford, MA: The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 1991).

² There may be within the general public, however, a greater willingness to support multilateral and even individual government (U.S.) intervention in case of threats to international peace and security or massive internal violence than is commonly realized. See the Roper Organization poll data analyzed by Jeffrey Laurenti in his report, *Directions and Dilemmas in Collective Security: Reflections from a Global Roundtable* (New York: United Nations Association of the United States of America, 1992), 22, 24-30.

³ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “Supplement to An Agenda for Peace: Position Paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations,” A/50/60-S/1995/1, 3 January 1995, in his *An Agenda for Peace 1995*, 2nd ed., with the new supplement and related documents (New York: United Nations, 1995).

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given the impression, as on the day in early March 1995 when U.N. peacekeeping troops departed from Somalia, that the widespread "hopes for a new international order that blossomed at the end of the cold war had evaporated."⁴

This shift in outlook, though not welcomed or even fully accepted as a reality by the present writer, nonetheless must be taken as the premise of any discussion today of the theme of "Military Intervention." For that reason, there is here offered, as a middle course between avoidance and intervention, a general approach to peacemaking and peacekeeping that may be termed "constructive containment." It combines two elements that have not been presented in an integrated way: containment, or resistance to expansion; and construction, or conciliation through the long-term rebuilding of relationships. "Constructive containment" will be further explained and illustrated below. The purpose here is not to coin a term, for the metal in the coin would not be new. At most, some older intellectual currency of statecraft is being reminted and given a new value. In particular, the thought and experience of George F. Kennan and Chester A. Crocker will be drawn upon in formulating a constructive-containment approach to dealing with conflict.⁵ As each of these practitioners of diplomacy has reflected, to give a policy a broad label—in their cases, "containment" and "constructive engagement," respectively—can be to produce as much distraction as clarification. The best foreign policies are probably implicit. Nonetheless, for the sake of exposition, and possible debate, the single amalgamated organizing concept, "constructive containment," is here put forward.

The "National Interest" Test Challenged

The apparent turning of the tide of opinion against military interventionism today is not, to be accurate and fair, the abandonment of "internationalism" for "isolationism." The 1990s are not the 1930s.⁶ Societies today are much too interdependent for self-sufficiency, or autarky, to be remotely achievable, either in economics or in security affairs. The new global economy is "causing a small revolution" in the nature of diplomacy, as Anthony Lake, President Clinton's National Security Adviser, points out in this issue. The economy of every nation, he states, "depends increasingly on participation in the single marketplace," and thus nations now are much more vulnerable "to the effects of economic isolation." Similarly, as George Lopez and David Cortright observe in their contribution on economic sanctions, because the nations of the world "are more deeply involved in trade" today, they are more easily harmed by "discontinuities in these exchanges." National welfare, indeed national survival in many cases, requires a strong and reliable connection with the world economy. It is equally unrealistic nowadays, even with the removal of the danger of strategic nuclear war, for the physical, or military, security of countries to be provided

⁴ Barbara Crossette, "U.N. Chief Ponders Future of Peacekeepers," *New York Times*, 3 March 1995.

⁵ See George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), chap. 15, "The X-Article," and Chester A. Crocker, *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making Peace in a Rough Neighborhood* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 75-81.

⁶ See Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935-41* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966).

for on a nation-by-nation basis. The practical assurances given by membership in alliances and also provided by the collective-security arrangements of the United Nations are necessary even for the sole surviving superpower, the United States.

The present change in attitude regarding internationally mandated military intervention is, for Americans at least, possibly related to a cyclical mood swing—the succession of what Henry Kissinger calls “euphoria” with periodic disillusionment, or “gloom.” Optimism and pessimism fluctuate, according to various versions of this theory, with historical regularity, though unfortunately not with a useful predictability. Americans believe for a time that they can do anything and suddenly, in Kissinger’s description of their reaction, they “panic,” doubting their own ideology and ability amidst “the ambiguities of an imperfect world.”⁷ There probably is a social-psychological basis for the current American self-reappraisal, at the elite as well as at the popular level. This has been called a “syndrome,” a characterization given by Thomas G. Weiss of which Donini takes note. A “Somalia syndrome” interpretation, however, makes the current American condition pathological, a lasting effect—rather than a normal reversal of pattern, a swing of a pendulum, which could come back to a forward policy. Such a return has not yet occurred, however.

The part that economics and finance—in an era of budgetary constraint—also plays in U.S. decision making must be recognized. The historian John Lewis Gaddis has shown how concern about national economic recovery has repeatedly influenced America’s assessment of its international capacity.⁸ The present interest of Senator Jesse Helms (R., North Carolina) and other members of Congress in cutting back foreign-aid expenditures is indicative of the current strength of the fiscal imperative. The near-passage by Congress early in 1995 of a constitutional amendment that would require a balanced federal budget, except in war or other major emergency, is further illustrative. The House of Representative’s National Security Revitalization Act and the Senate’s Peace Powers Act could significantly reduce the American contribution to the collective maintenance of international peace and security.⁹ Anthony Lake’s reference to “the old impulse to retrench” captures the current anti-interventionist feeling in Congress. There is an emergent consensus, among both Democrats and Republicans there, that the United States can no longer afford to underwrite the costs of upholding world order—to be the intervenor of last resort, so to speak.

Contemporaneously with the current re-estimating in the United States of what the country’s temper and treasury will allow in the way of intervention abroad, there is in progress as well an important philosophical reassessment. This is the reconsideration of what degree of commitment to multilateral organization and action is truly in the “national interest.” This seemingly precise and

⁷ Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), 12, 57, 65, 195, 1256.

⁸ John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁹ For an analysis of the comparable (and closely related) fiscal problems of the United Nations, see the Report by the Independent Advisory Group on U.N. Financing co-chaired by Shijuro Ogata and Paul Volcker, *Financing an Effective United Nations* (New York: Ford Foundation, 1993).

concrete term, so familiar from the foreign-policy debates after the Second World War¹⁰ and also in the Nixon-Kissinger era,¹¹ has become the very touchstone of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War period. The debate is bound to be an inconclusive one, as it was at earlier times. The fundamental reason is less the national interest's ambiguity, or the uncertainty about what precisely it means or requires (and who has the right to say so), than the reality that it has often been the nation's *values*, more than its material or even strategic concerns, that have determined the nature of its policy. Visions, principles, and spirit—not necessarily less palpable than ideas of interest—are likely to preclude any vast reduction of U.S. international responsibilities or commitments abroad. However, the present explicit querying about what the American stake really is in any particular situation is bound to have an effect on future U.S. behavior.

The articulation by Anthony Lake of "the seven national interests, taken in some combination or even alone, that this Administration believes can merit the use of our military" is clearly intended to rule out, as well as to rule in, some interventions. In discussing Rwanda and Somalia, for instance, he explains that "our interests did not justify more than support for multilateral peacekeeping efforts once our own missions"—primarily humanitarian and based on relatively narrow interests—were concluded. The decision process regarding the dispatch of particular future U.S. military missions is not, of course, just a matter of applying an "algorithm," Lake emphasizes. There is "no simple formula that asks us only to fill in the numbers." Yet the heightened element of calculation in American policy here is obvious. National interest-based thinking may well in the future predominate over broader, value considerations. And it may set a pattern for other states, with damaging results.¹²

The new national-interest "norm" must operate within the value-filled context of the United Nations Charter. This, in principle, morally and legally commits the United States and other U.N. members to act together to maintain international peace and security if called upon. Article 25 of the Charter obliges all U.N. members "to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council," which, following Article 39, "shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken." Thus, even though, given the state of public opinion, intervention might be impossible today, so too, given the obligations of the U.N. Charter, is avoidance.

How can interest, narrowly defined, and values, more broadly conceived, be

¹⁰ See, e.g., George Kennan's reflection in 1951 that "our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding," in George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy: 1900-1950* (New York: Mentor Books, 1959), 88.

¹¹ See Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), chap. 28, "Foreign Policy as Geopolitics: Nixon's Triangular Diplomacy."

¹² This result could, actually, be beneficial if leadership is contributed by others, regarding issues of special interest and concern to them. This possibility is described in Alan K. Henrikson, "Leadership, Cooperation, and the Contribution Principle," *NATO Review* 42, no. 6 (December 1994) and no. 1 (January 1995): 17-21.

reconciled? It is here suggested that one way of doing so is through "constructive containment." In actuality, as will be shown, "containing" conflicts is what the world community recently has, in fact, been doing, in conduct and sometimes even in name, in addressing many of the situations of aggression and disorder that have arisen after the Cold War. The world's management of most of these conflicts has not been carried out "constructively" enough, however, with enough emphasis being placed on long-term reconciliation and on cooperative development.

The rudiments of a "constructive containment" strategy do exist. Wholesale reinvention of doctrine is not necessary. Pieces can be taken from some of the policy applications of the past—notably the experience of "containing" the Soviet Union and, on a lower systemic level, the conduct of "constructive engagement" with the former apartheid regime in South Africa. If this suggestion of the relevance of Cold War-era thinking to post-Cold War-era planning is correct, then future international peace-and-security policy may not prove to be so very different from the strategies and tactics of the past. The Cold War period, though for different reasons (the nuclear balance of terror, need for regional allies, rigid ideological discipline), was also a period of restraint and careful measurement. It was also, as we now better appreciate, a stable period in which considerable rebuilding occurred—the advantages of a "Long Peace," as John Lewis Gaddis has called it.¹³ The "national interest" was not needed as an intellectual guideline in those years, as nations' self-control was imposed mainly by the international system. It is not certain that it is needed today, in a more complex and no less demanding international system.

"Containment" Re-Examined and Re-Applied

The most characteristic strategy of the United States and other Western countries during the Cold War was containment. In a broad sense, this was a middle position between continentalism, i.e., the "Fortress America" temptation, and globalism, i.e., the "liberation" thrust. The United States neither retreated to a monastery to guard and perfect its own virtue; nor did it embark upon a crusade to free "enslaved" peoples, behind the Iron Curtain or in the remaining colonies. Containment was not, it is important to note, merely defensive. It converted what otherwise might have been a static attitude of ideological and political confrontation into a program of action. It was not, however, openly offensive or threatening. In retrospect, containment seems to have "worked." Thus its lessons naturally hold interest for policy makers today, who even use the actual term.¹⁴ What succeeded against a superpower, it seems logical for

¹³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries Into the History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹⁴ E.g., Stephen A. Oxman, "Containment of the Bosnian Conflict," statement by the Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, DC, 21 July 1993, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 4, no. 32 (August 1993): 573-76.

them to assume, might have some chance of working with other, lesser powers—such as, for example, Iraq under Saddam Hussein or other angry “backlash states,” as they have been characterized by Anthony Lake.¹⁵

It may be recalled that the original policy of containment postulated that the West’s free institutions could best be defended against the pressures exerted by the Soviet Union through “the adroit and vigilant application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy, but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.” While not by itself capable of bringing about “the early fall” of the Soviet power, as Kennan acknowledged in his famous “X” article in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947, Western “counter-pressure” (not to be only or even mainly military, in Kennan’s preferred vision) would produce a change in Soviet behavior and, in time, even engender a change in the Soviet Union itself. The containment strategy would “increase enormously the strains” under which Soviet policy operated and it would force upon the Kremlin “a far greater degree of moderation and circumspection” than hitherto it had been forced to observe, Kennan believed. The result, when it came, could be dramatic, or it could be uneventful. As Kennan imagined the dénouement, the firm and patient containment of the U.S.S.R. would “promote tendencies which must eventually find their outlet in either the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.”¹⁶

Much this same notion has been applied by the Clinton Administration to a number of “recalcitrant and outlaw states” today. These “backlash states,” in Lake’s term, are those which remain outside the family of nations and continue to assault its “basic values” (note: not just “interests”). Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, and Libya are the ones he identifies by name. As the sole superpower, the United States has a special responsibility, Lake reasons, “for developing a strategy to neutralize, *contain* and, through selective pressure, perhaps eventually transform these backlash states into *constructive* members of the international community” (emphasis added).

Iraq and Iran in particular have been subjected by the U.S. government to a policy Lake has termed “dual containment.” That strategy is broader than the balance-of-power strategy previously followed, i.e., building up Iraq to counter Iran and vice versa. Henceforth, the balance in the area would be maintained by the United States and its regional allies without depending on either Iraq or Iran. Increasing the “isolation” of *both* states would have a number of purposes, Lake explained. It would reduce their ability to exploit the Arab-Israeli conflict. It would deny Baghdad and Teheran easy access to weapons of mass destruction or components thereof. And, by limiting their market access, it would put heavy economic pressure on them, thereby perhaps bringing about positive change.

¹⁵ Anthony Lake, “Confronting Backlash States,” *Foreign Affairs* 73 (March/April 1994): 45-55.

¹⁶ Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, 99, 105; also see Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, chap. 2, “George F. Kennan and the Strategy of Containment.” Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who has admired Kennan’s strategic design, faults it for implicitly retaining the fantasy of victory over the Soviet Union (“a peace achieved by the conversion of the adversary”) and also for failing to translate America’s existing superiority in the late 1940s into productive negotiations with Moscow. See Kissinger’s article, “Reflections on Containment,” in *Foreign Affairs* 73 (May/June 1994): 113-30.

This policy, Lake has been careful to indicate, is not entirely negative. Under the regime imposed on Iraq by the United Nations Security Council, it would be possible, under Security Council resolutions 706 and 712, for that country to sell limited quantities of oil in order to finance the purchase of food and needed humanitarian supplies. "More normal relations" with the government in Teheran also are possible, depending on that government's willingness to abide by international norms and to cease actions inimical to regional peace and security. As Washington has not had the backing of an international consensus, "containment" has been more difficult in the Iranian case. The United States did not mean to "quarantine" Iran or even to deny it all military-related goods. Furthermore, the U.S. government did not eschew "an authoritative dialogue" with Teheran. Dialogue and pressure are not "mutually exclusive" policy approaches, Lake has emphasized.

Referring by name to Kennan and his strategy for dealing with the Soviet Union, the National Security Adviser argued that the United States faced "a less formidable challenge" in containing the regional backlash states than it had confronted when successfully containing "an outlaw empire." It would remain within America's power, therefore, "to prevail."¹⁷ As this description of Lake's exposition of "dual containment" of Iraq and Iran makes evident, the U.S. government has consciously adapted measures of the Cold War period—containment and, by implication, its diplomatic variant, *détente*—to the challenges of the post-Cold War period. While not exactly a pacific approach, containment thus redeployed remains an alternative to military intervention.

"Constructive Engagement" Reviewed and Revived

Most of the secondary challenges of the Cold War era, largely because of the existence of the primary problem of containing a nuclear-armed Soviet Union, were handled within definite constraints, both ideological and geopolitical. The Vietnam War is the exception that proves the rule in this respect; it elevated a regional security problem to worldwide significance. The more usual pattern is illustrated by the U.S. government's management of relations with the white-dominated government of South Africa. Although American relationships with other politically oppressive regimes, such as the military governments of Argentina, South Korea, and Pakistan, exhibit some of the same characteristics, the U.S. government's contact with the South African leaders and officials, and selected elements of South African society, is especially worth re-examining. U.S. South African policy was highly rationalized and articulated. In part because of this earlier dialogue, the notion of diplomatic "engagement" has currency and application today. As will be seen, its logic and even its terminology are being employed in, for instance, U.S. official dealings with the People's Republic of China, which is perhaps the most important case. One may also observe its effect in relations with the successor governments of the former

¹⁷ Lake, "Confronting Backlash States."

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea).

Against the repressive South African regime—a bulwark of anti-communism, if morally groundless—the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the U.N. General Assembly majority called for militant action, i.e., intervention. The Reagan Administration developed instead the policy of “constructive engagement,” i.e., of dealing with the South African leadership in a businesslike way, while at the same time trying to alter its orientation and conduct. “In South Africa,” as Secretary of State George Shultz has explained the approach, “the United States would maintain its presence and involvement and would use that presence and involvement to speak and work against apartheid.”¹⁸ The principal author and administrator of the constructive engagement policy was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A. Crocker. The premise was realistic: that the United States had “neither the leverage nor the mandate” to impose blueprints or timetables.¹⁹ Rather, the U.S. government was actively going “to engage” and thereby foster a climate conducive to compromise and accommodation in South Africa and the region. The word, “engagement,” suggested not so much negotiation—that is, conventional diplomacy aimed at reaching agreement—as a system-to-system confrontation, i.e., a tough program of interchange across the whole front of relations with the South Africa monolith. The term itself has military origins, as in “rules of engagement.”

The necessary conditions for the success of “constructive engagement,” as Crocker has enumerated them, are the following: (1) a reasonable degree of stability in the underlying balance of power, both in reality and in the perceptions of leaders; (2) a stalemate in any immediate military conflict on the ground, or “equation” on the battlefield; (3) strength, confidence, and coherence in key capitals, so that the leadership groups there can take “big decisions” within roughly the same time frame; (4) sufficient diplomatic skill to make “the linkage formula”—viz., Cuban military withdrawal from Angola in exchange for a South African pullback from Namibia—effective through the negotiation of mirror-image conditional (“yes . . . if”) commitments; and (5) acceptable “forum or mechanism” for dialogue enabling the parties to communicate, maintain contact, and bargain. The resulting bundle of causal and diplomatic relationships is complex, being multilateral, multidimensional, and multi-layered. The conduct of constructive engagement requires flexibility as well as forcefulness. As Crocker recalls the diplomatic acrobatics involved, it necessitated continuous movement between different “tracks” of the negotiation, a constant shifting of weight between them and an adjustment of message to the contending parties. “The linkage formula determined which ‘side’ we supported on a particular issue,” he explains.

The “sustained and nimble diplomacy” entailed by the constructive engage-

¹⁸ George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993), 1112.

¹⁹ This and subsequent quotations are drawn from Crocker's detailed memoir, *High Noon in Southern Africa*, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77.

ment policy was, by design, open-ended. This reflected Crocker's appreciation that the situation in South and southern Africa in the early 1980s was not yet "ripe" for settlement.²⁰ Rather than seeking "understandings" or making deals with leaders—that is, telling them precisely what they needed to do in order to satisfy U.S. official wishes, thereby implying that there might be no further inconvenient demands—Crocker and his colleagues sought only to begin processes of "incremental" change, counting somewhat vaguely on beneficial "unintended consequences." Thus, for example, they pressed upon South Africa's white leadership the idea of "power sharing" with blacks.

Well aware that critics at home and elsewhere would dismiss such efforts as "ameliorative," Crocker was defensive. Yet he had a case. For the United States just to "hold back," denying support to all "partial, interim steps," was in his view "a form of escapism." Such disengagement, paradoxically and perversely, might even encourage the South African government to believe that Washington sought its "total capitulation"—in effect, intervention, if not by the United States itself then by South Africa's hostile neighbors. The black opposition within South Africa might conclude that only "a bloody upheaval" would do the job, and perhaps even imagine that the U.S. government would condone revolutionary violence. Constructive engagement could prevent this mutually disadvantageous and dread outcome.

In operational terms, what "constructive engagement" meant in the 1980s was official American readiness "to meet publicly with the top leadership as appropriate," within South Africa itself or in other places. It also meant U.S. Executive Branch resistance to sanctions (beyond denial of weapons exports, refusal to use South African defense facilities, and disapproval of apartheid practices). Ordinary trade and investment continued freely, until in 1985 Congress tightened the rules. Constructive engagement also meant furtherance of private and nonprofit sector efforts to promote institution-building and encouragement of black-empowerment programs in South Africa. These were all essentially bilateral relationships. In order to generalize the strategy, the U.S. government coordinated its efforts with other members of the so-called Contact Group, including Canada, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Efforts were made as well to keep the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other communist countries, to the maximum extent possible, out of the southern African arena—it being recognized, at the same time, that Moscow's and Havana's cooperation was needed. Partial success for the constructive engagement strategy came when on 22 December 1988 the Angola-Namibia Accords were signed. Namibia emerged as an independent state, and South Africa, though not itself directly affected by the agreements, was forced into a new orientation. External causes, as Crocker had promised, came to have internal effects.

The anti-apartheid campaign was crowned when in early 1994 a reborn South African state held elections confirming its new identity as a non-racial democ-

²⁰ The concept of "ripeness" as a precondition for the negotiation, as distinct from "diplomatic management," of problems is analyzed by a Bush administration National Security Staff assistant, Richard N. Haass, in *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

racy. Resulting primarily from the efforts of the South African people themselves, this outcome was aided by what Secretary Shultz called the “presence” and “involvement” of the constructive engagement policy. President Clinton in an April 1994 address, “American Engagement in a Changing World,” credited the outcome of the struggle in South Africa in part to the U.S. (Congress-imposed) sanctions program, the electoral assistance recently given, and the prospect of increased U.S. economic aid. He stated further that “this kind of vigorous American engagement and leadership remains vital not only in South Africa but around the globe.” He mentioned specifically the need for “active engagement” in dealing with the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, the challenge posed by the North Korean nuclear program, and the sponsorship by Iran and other “backlash states” of terrorism.²¹ The carryover of American policy from past to present—a Republican strategic plan, Democratically somewhat liberalized—is unmistakable.

The Clinton Administration, surely conscious of its inheritance, has thus far used “engagement” most prominently in dealing with the People’s Republic of China. As with policy toward Pretoria, the American approach to Beijing is complex. In both instances, the expectation has been that disagreement over basic issues would be protracted. The United States initially threatened not to continue most-favored-nation (MFN) trading privileges for China because of its government’s abuses of human rights and other violations of values. Even after deciding to “delink” human rights and MFN, President Clinton promised increased pressure on Beijing through “aggressive contacts.” In view of reports of continued human-rights offenses, the United States would carry forward sanctions that were imposed after the June 1989 events in Tiananmen Square. It would ban any further importation of guns and ammunition produced in China. It would, moreover, pursue a “new and vigorous” program to support persons in China working to advance the cause of human rights and freedom. One of these measures, especially reminiscent of previous efforts made regarding South Africa, was an initiative to develop with American business leaders “a voluntary set of principles for business activity in China”—the implicit model being the Sullivan Principles adopted by many U.S. corporations having South African investments. Human rights thus would be promoted in ways other than through simple trade leverage. Relationships—presence and involvement—would be developed. “Extending MFN will avoid isolating China,” President Clinton reasoned, “and, instead, will permit us to engage the Chinese with not only economic contacts but with cultural, educational, and other contacts, and with a continuing aggressive efforts in human rights—an approach that I believe will make it more likely that China will play a responsible role, both at home and abroad.”²²

²¹ President William J. Clinton, “American Engagement in a Changing World: A Vital Commitment,” radio address to the nation, Washington, DC, 30 April 1994, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 5, no. 18 (2 May 1994): 249.

²² President William J. Clinton, “U.S. Renews Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for China,” opening statement at news conference, Washington, DC, 26 May 1994, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 5, no. 22 (30 May 1994): 345-46.

The key elements of the evolving American strategy of “engagement” may here be summarized: On the basis of a realistic determination that the United States has only a limited interest, right, and duty—and also limited influence—in dealing with any particular recalcitrant regime, the U.S. government nonetheless initiates and actively maintains contact, “engages.” It openly deals not only with government leaders and officials but also with opposition parties, dissidents, and other groups and individuals within the country. The basic hope is to engender a process of dynamic movement therein, without becoming too active a participant in promoting reform efforts. “Presence” and “involvement” are the means. The end is “change.” Any progress most likely will be incremental, achieved slowly and step by step. Comprehensive resolutions of issues are not considered likely, or even particularly desirable, for such thoroughgoing understandings or deals would have to be made with an unrepresentative leadership, probably untrustworthy and possibly transitory. Engagement is more than a diplomatic process. It is a systemic encounter. It extends from face to face meetings with leaders to working contacts with bureaucrats to exchanges at the social level. It also addresses a wide range of issues, sometimes linking them. Although usually conducted bilaterally, an engagement strategy rarely can be effective if not supported by the parallel and sympathetic actions of other governments and international organizations. Such cooperation can be critical.²³

The most undeveloped element in the American concept of engagement is, as earlier suggested, that indicated by Crocker’s qualifying adjective: “constructive.” Connoting a process of building and a future-orientation, a *constructive* strategy of engagement implies a progressive elevation in tone of an international relationship, as well as a deeper process of cooperation to undergird it. Although engagement diplomacy, through the (often arbitrary) tactical device of linkage, may include promises of eventual reward as well as threats of future punishment, there rarely is factored into it any profoundly considered concept of interdependence or strategy for mutual benefit—like the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan), for instance. Indeed, the very word, “constructive,” can be just a verbal cover—a convenient shield against a possible charge of appeasement.²⁴

Naturally preoccupied with immediate breakthroughs and other short-term gains, policy makers and diplomats have sometimes neglected to think through and spell out the major long-term constructive concessions, or balanced trade-offs, that may be required to complete as well as to initiate a peace-building relationship. A failure to specify what sorts of economic and other assistance

²³ The “collective-action problem” in putting international pressure on misbehaving governments is cogently analyzed by Lisa L. Martin, *Coercive Cooperation: Explaining Multilateral Economic Sanctions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²⁴ Chester Crocker, who rejected any such thought, was at pains to make clear: “The strategy of constructive engagement was not a gift to any ‘side,’ but a forceful assertion of leadership in support of American values and interests” (*High Noon in Southern Africa*, 79). An American diplomat of an earlier generation, Joseph Grew, who sensed that he was suspected of “advocating so-called appeasement” when he was Ambassador in Tokyo before Pearl Harbor, explained that what he sought was “constructive conciliation.” Waldo H. Heinrichs, Jr., *American Ambassador: Joseph C. Grew and the Development of the United States Diplomatic Tradition* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), 349.

might be given the parties to a conflict *on the condition that* they make peace on the basis of accepted principles with satisfactory safeguards has often deprived engagement diplomacy of its potential effectiveness and historic consequence. The idea of "constructive engagement," however, represents a start. It deserves to be built upon.

"Containment" and "Constructive Engagement" Today Combined

Since early 1994, some very limited "constructive" alternatives have been offered to the parties being "contained" in the former Yugoslavia. One is the suggestion made by the five-power Contact Group—France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States—that there might be a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina (to put pressure on the Serb side to withdraw from territory seized) together with a lifting of the economic sanctions on the remaining Yugoslav state (to make the Bosnian side more willing to accept a compromise settlement). Subsequently, there have been suggestions to President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade that, if he were to accept as legitimate the boundaries of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the economic sanctions against the Serbian state might be lifted—even all at once, should the Serb-Croat and Serb-Bosnian conflicts somehow be settled. Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev reportedly is willing to go even further with inducements, viz., by permitting the Serbs in Bosnia and those in rump Yugoslavia to form a confederation.²⁵ The loosely federated arrangement that already has been formed between the Muslim and Croat populations within Bosnia-Herzegovina has been offered a package of international financial help, with the United States, the European Union, and some Muslim nations pledging funds. A Friends of the Federation group also has been formed to sustain the fragile Muslim-Croat political alliance. The interest of outsiders can bring about constructive activity within. "The federation is the way to build Bosnia and Herzegovina from the inside," said its Muslim Vice President, Ejup Ganic. Up to now, he said, "we have succeeded in building the federation house from the roof; we have built less on the ground."²⁶

So far, no truly comprehensive plan has been presented for the physical rebuilding, economic restructuring, and political reconstitution of the former-Federal Yugoslavian region as a whole. Mostly, it is day-to-day humanitarian supplies and basic services that are being proffered, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Red Cross, Red Crescent, and other relief agencies. One indication of the kind of integrative measure that might be developed for presentation to all the parties is the provisional agreement made early in 1995—and endorsed by the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee—to allow natural gas to flow from Russia through an existing

²⁵ Roger Cohen, "Yugoslavia Rules Out Recognition of Croatia or Bosnia Soon," *New York Times*, 23 February 1995.

²⁶ Craig R. Whitney, "To Avoid Wider War, West Will Bolster Muslim-Croat Accord," *New York Times*, 5 February 1995; Steven Greenhouse, "Clinton Meets With Bosnian and Croatian Chiefs," *New York Times*, 17 March 1995.

pipeline to both rump Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The implementation of the plan is appropriately made contingent on Serbian noninterference with the gas shipments going to Sarajevo.²⁷ A reopening of transportation routes on a regional basis also is necessary. The containment strategies being applied to the Balkans can thus be more constructive, offering the peoples of the area shares in a future common welfare—a “commonwealth” in a secured regional frame.

In the no less difficult case of Iraq, “constructive” measures must be even more hypothetical. The restrictive and rightly punitive regime imposed by the U.N. Security Council on Saddam Hussein’s government could permit Iraq to sell a portion of its oil supplies in order to purchase necessary food and medical items—provided that it formally recognizes the sovereignty of Kuwait (which it did in November 1994) and gives acceptable assurances, externally verified, that it has no weapons of mass destruction. Certain permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—notably Russia and France—have been disposed to lift the ban on Iraqi oil exports, for business reasons as well as for humanitarian ones. The United States, being able to present evidence of renewed military preparation and weapons development in Iraq, continues to hold the line against this.²⁸ A basic strategy for rehabilitating the Iraqi economy, should there be a regime change or basic policy change in Baghdad, nonetheless exists.

North Korea, under its new “dear leader” Kim Jong Il, received in 1994 what has been characterized as the “mother of all birthday presents.” This came in the form of a U.S.-negotiated scheme by which Pyongyang is to be provided with two modern light-water nuclear reactors, valued at some four billion dollars, as replacements for its existing reactors which are believed capable of producing plutonium for weapons.²⁹ In exchange for this substantial benefit from the outside, North Korea would freeze its nuclear-development program.³⁰ This imaginative arrangement is, in the vivid phrase of Anthony Lake in this issue of *The Fletcher Forum*, “a hell of a deal”—unmistakably in Crocker’s “big decision” classification. The Agreed Framework worked out between the North Korean government and U.S. negotiator Robert Gallucci does not itself specify the source of the reactors to be provided, but the clear American understanding remains that South Korea, expected to finance a large part of the project, should get the contract—a provision that Pyongyang has found politically difficult to accept. The most promising feature of this boldly “constructive” long-term scheme, motivated by a desire to contain the North Korean nuclear-weapons menace in the near term, is the undertaking, through a proposed Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO), to institute a standardized nuclear-reactor program that could become the basis of a unified electricity grid for the entire

²⁷ “U.N. Agreement on Natural Gas to Balkans,” *New York Times*, 22 February 1995.

²⁸ Elaine Sciolino, “U.S. Says It’s Won Votes to Maintain Sanctions on Iraq,” *New York Times*, 5 March 1995.

²⁹ “North Korea: Waiting for Kim,” *The Economist* (11 February 1995): 35.

³⁰ The main provisions of the plan are set forth in the remarks made by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Korea-America Friendship Society in Seoul on 9 November 1994, *U.S. Department of State Dispatch* 5, no. 46 (14 November 1994): 757-60.

Korean peninsula. Such physical interdependence, involving Japan, the United States, and perhaps other countries in nearby or distant support, could become a cornerstone of peace in the Northeast Asian region.³¹

Abstracting somewhat from these cases, one can see what “constructive containment” as an alternative to military intervention might today involve. The method should be to construct around an unstable and dangerous state or society a scaffolding of future opportunity as well as present restraint. A country can be “buttressed” while being “contained.” Should it happen eventually to collapse, as did the Soviet state under the rigors of containment and from inner decrepitude, it can be reconstructed, using materials, expertise, and other help provided from outside. In the Russian case, the international community—including the Group of Seven, International Monetary Fund, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s Cooperation Council and Partnership for Peace mechanisms—has been firm but supportive. Implicit containment and explicit construction, despite what might seem to be the inherent contradiction of these two approaches, can in fact be successfully combined.³²

“Constructive Containment” and Other Alternatives to Intervention

The basic objective of “constructive containment” or any similarly motivated policy, including some of those discussed in the present issue of *The Fletcher Forum*, must be to bring about the return of the so-called backlash states as normal participants in the community of nations. In achieving such a purpose, international law, as Anthony D’Amato conceives of own discipline, can be a effective force—even without the physical backing of a central enforcement authority. Law is a consensual fabric, and it is tough, he believes. It can also be creative. The system of rules and entitlements constituting international law can have the effect of actually defining what a “state” is. D’Amato writes: “A new state, at the moment it comes into being, simply ‘knows’ what it owns and what its rights are just from what international law tells it.” This argument implies that the very nature of a state, not merely its behavior, might be determined from the outside, by the shaping influence of the dominant world legal environment.

D’Amato’s arresting line of thought, which is explicitly Lockean (rather than Hobbesian), is consistent with, and would seem basically to support, the more strategic (and admittedly less normative) concept of constructive containment here offered. There must be some doubt, however, as to whether all states—in-

³¹ This whole arrangement bears a striking resemblance to the “construction” in Europe in the 1950s, for purposes of Franco-German reconciliation and wider European stabilization and development, of the European Coal and Steel Community (ESCE) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). See the account in François Duchêne, *Jean Monnet: The First Statesman of Interdependence* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994).

³² The difficult though manageable task of combining “peace-building” with “peace-keeping,” “peacemaking,” and “peace enforcement” is discussed by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in “Position paper of the Secretary-General on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations,” 5-38.

cluding those that are “new” (like the reborn Cambodia/Kampuchea), those that are in process of separation from larger states (such as the successor states of the U.S.S.R. or the former Yugoslavia), and those that are undergoing fundamental regime changes (including Russia itself and potentially China)—should be considered as malleable, or subject to the gentle persuasions and reciprocating actions of international legal process, as D’Amato’s approach would seem to promise. Sanctions, he himself acknowledges, might prove to be necessary. These and other forcible measures result from application of the “secondary” rules maintaining the overall system of world law. Any enforcement measures, D’Amato emphasizes, ought to be “proportional” to the severity of the violation of the “primary” rules. This can be a difficult relationship to calibrate, of course. If such measures “go too far” (constituting “excessive force”), he warns, they might “tip the scale,” and even “invite retaliatory force.” He therefore generally favors measures, including proportionate sanctions, that have been “carefully refined through time.”

The question naturally arises whether such well-adjusted diplomatic and other measures, in the short run at least, can be effective and satisfactory alternatives to military intervention. “Excessive” actions that are designed to have a deterrent effect, implicitly warning of stern (and possibly even increasingly disproportionate) punishment in the future, would seem to be excluded. Anthony Lake, from the U.S. government perspective, follows Dean Acheson, a more Hobbesian lawyer than D’Amato, in asserting that “diplomacy disconnected from power usually fails.” The “very heart” of American power, Lake asserts, is “military force.” He puts his readers, and others, on notice that the United States remains “prepared to fight and win two major regional conflicts almost simultaneously.” When the United States uses force, he further declares, it must be ready to “use it unflinchingly.” The United States sometimes will act alone, if necessary—as when it responded militarily (and, some might say, excessively) to an Iraqi plot against the life of former President George Bush. In discussing the removal of the military dictatorship in Haiti, Lake explains that, “in the end it was only the use of force that could finally bring success.” Haiti’s generals capitulated only when they received news that the 82nd Airborne was en route. In the case of Bosnia, it was the threat of NATO air strikes that relieved the Serbian pressure on Sarajevo, prevented the fall of Goradze, and provided the basis of security for the Bosnian Muslim-Croat federation. When recounting these various contributions made by U.S. and NATO military power, Lake freely admits that in other situations, such as Rwanda and Somalia, military-backed peacekeeping operations only give “a fractured society a window of opportunity.”

Antonio Donini’s article calls into question even the limited utility of military intervention. The post-Cold War infatuation with this way of responding to “crises” (the very concept of which he considers unidimensional) is the product of thinking that suffers from “excessive simplification”—that is, an intellectual temptation to break down complex problems into “seemingly treatable slices.” Simplifying problems may facilitate action, but the resulting action is less and less likely to be effective, he contends. The new world reality is “complex

substantive issue linkage," as the political scientists Peter and Ernst Haas term it. "Aggressive peace-enforcement," such as that employed in Somalia and Bosnia, may result only in unsuccessful, even counterproductive "quick fixes." Donini himself, recognizing that conflicts often arise within social structures and are not just "abnormal crises," urges a much more multifaceted, package-like approach. International peacekeeping must emphasize humanitarian and other nonmilitary dimensions of problems.

Donini's insightful observations concerning the Somalian situation in particular suggest practical ways by which constructive-containment strategies might be made more effective. For example, rather than concentrating peacekeeping efforts on Mogadishu, Somalia's center, more attention should have been placed on the countryside, the periphery. The United Nations operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) "suffered from being 'state-centric' and therefore excessively focused on the capital," he critically writes, noting with irony the prominence now being given to the notion of "failed states." Moreover, instead of "militarizing humanitarian assistance" in order to get it to vulnerable groups, it might have been possible, Donini recommends, to use "market mechanisms" and "private transport" to move some of it. Furthermore, "cross-border land routes" might have been used more heavily, thus "short-circuiting Mogadishu altogether." If necessary, vulnerable social groups in Somalia could have been drawn into marginal safe areas. The United Nations could have established protected areas close to the borders, within the country or perhaps even within neighboring states.³³ In sum, a kind of "humanitarian encirclement" of Somalia might have been built. How truly "constructive" such humanitarian containment would have been is open to question. Sooner or later, an actual state mechanism would be needed—and will have to be built. Significant resources will somehow have to be found, either provided externally or produced in conjunction with a reconstituted Somali authority, for "nation-building."³⁴

George Lopez and David Cortright in their article have suggested how sanctions themselves—"sanctions in reverse"—might be used to provide incentives to induce orderly and peaceful behavior. They explore, albeit only in a preliminary way, the utility of employing "carrots" rather than "sticks" as the means for ensuring international compliance with norms and standards. The use of such incentives, or "positive" sanctions, is less understood than the employment of traditional "negative" sanctions. A much greater focus on

³³ Mohamed Sahnoun, for a time the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General in Somalia, emphasizes the importance of cooperative support from surrounding countries, as well as the relevant regional organizations—Organization of African Unity, League of Arab States, and Organization of the Islamic Conference. Mohamed Sahnoun, *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1994).

³⁴ Congressman Thomas E. Petri (R., Wisconsin), a former Peace Corps volunteer in Somalia, has interestingly proposed that the United Nations organize all the providers of aid into "a unified structure" to collect tariffs and payroll taxes—even on imported foreign aid and on the salaries of Somalis hired by aid organizations. This would be "turned over to the Somali government when it organizes." Thus the United Nations would "facilitate Somalia's establishment of a centralized government, as well as provide the stream of funds necessary for its continued existence." Thomas E. Petri, "Here's a Way Out of Somalia," *Washington Times*, 15 November 1993.

"reward-based strategies" clearly now is in order. The "suspicion" of Lopez and Cortright is that in dealing with such issues as nuclear nonproliferation, incentives may even be "more effective" than sanctions. They cite the help being offered North Korea. They mention as well the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's proposal of "debt for denuclearization" swaps with certain republics of the former Soviet Union. They also mention that international lending institutions and large foreign-aid donors are now actively considering the use of positive inducements to encourage demilitarization policies.³⁵

Like the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Nomi Bar-Yaacov in her contribution stresses the complementary nature of all the operations involved in institutionalizing peace, including "post-conflict peace-building." In particular, she emphasizes the importance of factoring human-rights considerations into post-conflict reconstruction efforts. This was done more successfully in El Salvador than in Haiti, where the joint U.N./Organization of American States human rights mission found itself on the sidelines. The Salvadoran effort was significantly aided by the diplomatic support of a group of Friends of the Secretary-General, including Colombia, Mexico, Spain, and Venezuela. Such outside help—a kind of contact group—was missing in the case of Haiti. The lack of international political will meant that help had to come mainly from one country, the United States. This may have been unfortunate, as it created the impression (which Anthony Lake recognizes and expressly disavows) that Haiti again has fallen into an American "sphere of influence." Any strategy of "humanitarian encirclement," or soft "constructive containment," must be a wider community effort in order to be internationally acceptable.

All of the contributors to *The Fletcher Forum's* special feature on "Alternatives to Military Intervention" advance a general case for finding new ways of consolidating the post-Cold War or, perhaps, post-post-Cold War international order. A common theme of the following articles is that, owing to the increased interdependence of the international system today, the use of military force, though it may be necessary in some cases, can be disruptive, and it usually provides no more than a temporary or partial solution. The author's individual treatments of this theme, from different disciplinary, national, and institutional perspectives, are fascinating. It is a pleasure, with this introductory essay, to commend them.

³⁵ This was a major and recurrent theme at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995. Mahbub ul Haq, a senior Pakistani adviser to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, proposed at the Copenhagen meeting that every dollar of canceled debt should be spent on social services, that the forgiven indebtedness should be matched by national reductions in arms spending, and that the use of the resulting funds should be internationally monitored. Barbara Crossette, "U.N. Parley Puts Focus on Africa," *New York Times*, 9 March 1995.

