

EXCERPTS FROM ADDRESS BY SENATOR FULBRIGHT, "THE TWO AMERICAS" - GIVEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT ON MARCH 22, 1966, AND PRINTED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD OF MARCH 25, 1966, pp. 6416-6421.

*Sample*  
There are two Americas. One is the America of Lincoln and Adlai Stevenson; the other is the America of Teddy Roosevelt and General MacArthur. One is generous and humane, the other narrowly egotistical; one is modest and self-critical, the other arrogant and self-righteous; one is sensible, the other romantic; one is good-humored, the other solemn; one is inquiring, the other pontificating; one is moderate and restrained, the other filled with passionate intensity....

The inconstancy of American foreign policy is not an accident but an expression of two distinct sides of the American character. Both are characterized by a kind of moralism, but one is the morality of decent instincts tempered by the knowledge of human imperfection and the other is the morality of absolute self-assurance fired by the crusading spirit....

After 20 years of world power, the United States must decide which of the two sides of its national character is to predominate - the humanism of Lincoln or the aggressive moralism of Theodore Roosevelt. One or the other will help shape the spirit of the age - unless of course we refuse to choose, in which case America may come to play a less important role in the world, leaving the great decisions to others....

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Commenting last October on the reaction to those who have opposed the war in Vietnam, a European observer wrote: "The airy contempt with which many of the unofficial defenders of official policy nowadays treat such 'sentimental' considerations as international law, neutral opinion, or even the wishes of the unfortunate people of Vietnam, is indeed something new in responsible American circles; to one European who has just spent a year in the United States, it sounded ominously similar to the notorious 'Realpolitik' of Imperial Germany, while the protesters seemed to embody the American democratic tradition"....

The foremost need of American foreign policy is a renewal of dedication to an "idea that mankind can hold to" - not a missionary idea full of pomposities about saving the sinful and civilizing the heathen but a Lincolnian idea expressing what Aldous Huxley has called "the simple human preference for life and peace".....

Wars breed war fever; when a nation is involved in a bitter foreign conflict, hopes give way to fears and creative and generous attitudes give way to a false and strident patriotism. That, I believe, is what is happening in America today, and there can be no cure for it except an end to the war in Asia. As long as the war continues, whatever our material resources, the harsh and egotistical America will prevail over the generous and humane America. It will prevail not only in Vietnam but, to one degree or another, depending upon the length and size of the war, in relations with the Communist world, with the neutrals, with our allies and in relations with each other here at home....

In this spirit, I say that I do not think there is something wrong with our foreign policy; I do think there is a discrepancy between two Americas, one magnanimous and humane, the other arrogant and self-righteous, a discrepancy which has nothing to do with the faults and failures of the "other side."



The resulting ambivalence of our policy, as currently manifested in Vietnam and Santo Domingo, arises specifically from the fact that in the years since World War II the United States has been simultaneously committed to policies of opposing communism and supporting nationalism.... For complex reasons, deriving in large part from our early postwar experience with Soviet Communist imperialism, we have tended to give our opposition to communism priority over our support for nationalism. The result has been that, with certain exceptions, we have strongly, and for the most part unsuccessfully, opposed those genuinely nationalist movements which have been controlled or influenced by Communists.... Whatever wisdom or lack of it our emphasis on communism has had in the past, the realities of the present require a reversal of priorities as between opposing communism and supporting nationalism....

Such a nonideological approach may commend itself to the practical and humane strand in our national character, but it is anathema to that other, puritanical strand, which predisposes us to ideological conflict and, indeed, suggests that there is something immoral about any other kind of conflict. The ambivalence in our foreign relations seems to arise, therefore, from the discrepancy between the two Americas, the one making us the friend of social revolution all over the world, the other making us an enemy to communism in all its forms, and the two together making for a troublesome inconstancy and self-defeating policies....

Nationalism, rather than Western democracy or Soviet or Chinese communism, is the dominant force in southeast Asia, as it is in much of the rest of the world.... It is contended that if the United States makes major concessions in Vietnam the credibility of our other guarantees and commitments will be undermined and countries which depend on American support, from Thailand to Germany, will lose faith in the United States. As H. L. Mencken once said, there is something in this but not much. In fact, many of America's allies are more inclined to worry about an undue American preoccupation with Vietnam than to fear the consequences of an American withdrawal, provided that withdrawal is orderly and based on a negotiated agreement.... As to the small Asian nations bordering on Vietnam, it is possible that the violence and inconclusiveness of the war have raised doubts in their minds as to whether it is not more painful to be saved than to be abandoned by the United States....

There is even some reason to believe - and I say this in full awareness that it contradicts the strongly held view of most Americans - that China may not wish to subject the small countries around her borders to her military and political domination.... The ferocity of Peking's language has obscured the fact that in practice China has tolerated a high degree of independence on the part of her neighbors....

The United States thus pursues two largely incompatible policies in Latin America - discriminating support for social reform and an indiscriminating anticommunism that often makes us the friend of corrupt and reactionary oligarchies.... The Latin American policies of the United States have been distorted by a tendency to identify reform with revolution and revolution with communism....

...three major questions: First, are we to be the friend or the enemy of the social revolutions of Asia and Latin America? Second, are we to regard the Communist countries as more or less normal states with whom we can have more or less normal relations, or are we to regard them indiscriminately as purveyors of an evil ideology with whom we can never reconcile? Finally, are we to regard ourselves as a friend and counselor and possibly as an example for those around the world who seek freedom and who also want our help, or are we to play the role of God's avenging angel, the appointed missionary of freedom in a wicked and benighted world?