

**United States Policy Towards Asia and Africa  
During the Cold War**

By Stein Tønnesson

Second lecture presented at the University of Oslo,  
in partial fulfilment of the degree of Doctor Philosophiae,  
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**Introduction**

The 'cold war' was not a war. It has therefore also been called 'the long peace'. It was a forty years worldwide military, technological and diplomatic rivalry between two superpowers, with opposing economic and political systems, and with antagonistic ideologies. The rivalry began in the final phase of the Second World War, reached its apex in the early 1950s, relaxed for a while after the death of Stalin in 1953, went through a longer détente period in the 1970s, then resurfaced as "the second cold war" in 1978, and ended in Reykjavik in 1987, when the leader of one of the antagonists made a highly acclaimed surrender.

My main concern today shall be with how the cold war - in the sense of the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union - affected US policy towards Asia and Africa. The lecture will be in three parts, each structured around one magic figure. First, Asian and African developments from 1945 to 1987 are divided into seven arms. Then, the principles that guided US policy are described in ten commandments. Finally, I conclude that US actions in Asia and Africa during the cold war had three main fallouts.

**Seven Arms**

The seven arms of contemporary Asian and African political

history form the circumstances to which the United States had to relate. It was not within the power of the USA to start or stop them - but the United States could enhance them, redirect them or set obstacles to them.

The first and central arm is the breakup of the European empires. "There is no escape from [the] fact", wrote Secretary of State George Marshall in February 1947, "that colonial empires in [the] XIX Century sense are rapidly becoming [a] thing of [the] past." Marshall was right. In 1947, most of Africa and Asia was still ruled by Europeans, but in the course of the cold war, all but one of the European empires were dissolved, to be replaced by some ninety sovereign states in Africa and Asia. As voters in the United Nations General Assembly, this so-called "third world" became a focus of superpower rivalry. The only remaining European empire in Asia and Africa after the cold war was that of the Soviet Union, with its Caucasian and Central Asian republics.

The second arm is the unification of China. During the period of the great European empires, China was weak and divided against itself, but from the nationalist awakening of the 1920s and the ensuing war against Japan, two unifying parties and armies emerged, one Kuomintang, one red. They clashed in 1947, after having competed for support from both Moscow and Washington. The diplomatic rivalry was won by Chiang Kai-shek; but in 1949, it was not external support, but well organized popular support - and control of Manchuria - that brought victory to Mao Zedong's communist party. Chiang Kai-shek fled to the former Japanese colony of Taiwan, where he built a Chinese mini-state. The whole of mainland China became united under a centralized communist regime which was to survive the cold war, although its reform programmes failed. After the cold war, popular and student discontent erupted in China, and the regime lost internal legitimacy.

The third arm is formed by the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Korea and Vietnam both belong to the traditional Chinese world, with strong Confucian values but little institutionalized religion. In the mid-20th century, such cultures provided

a particularly fertile ground for the communist variant of nationalism. Korea and Vietnam developed much along the lines of China, with parties of young and dedicated communist nationalists mobilizing peasants for the struggle against external domination and traditional indigenous elites. Left to themselves, both countries would have seen successful communist revolutions, and the establishment of independent centralized states. These states would not have prospered, but they would probably have managed to suppress opposition until the secession crises of the 1990s, when the founding fathers of the communist regimes died out. Instead, however, counter-revolutionary external interventions led to major wars, escalated by US intervention in 1950 and ending 25 years later with the communist liberation of Saigon.

The fourth arm is the revival of Greater Asian Co-Prosperity. During the Second World War, Japan grounded its conquests in promises of a "Greater Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere". Instead, the subjugated peoples were forced to sustain Japan's war needs. After the surrender, however, occupied Japan recovered. Under the American umbrella, it became an economic superpower. With some delay, South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Thailand followed this lead. Japan gradually took upon itself the role of a greater Asian locomotive in a growth region that encompassed all the non-communist countries of its 1942 empire. In the 1980s, Japanese big business also began to invest in the communist states of China, North Korea and Vietnam.

The fifth arm is the survival of the Indian Federation. The British had created an Indian state structure alongside the many principalities co-existing on the Indian sub-continent. When the British left India in 1947, they handed it over to the Congress Party of Jawaharlal Nehru who set out to unite the entire sub-continent in an Indian Federation. The Islamic parts in the northwest and east broke out and formed Pakistan, but Nehru and his successors managed to unite the rest and keep it together in a state with its own protected economy (the rupi zone), a slow but gradual economic growth,

and a neutral foreign policy.

The sixth arm is the strife and poverty of a divided Africa. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the French and British gave up their African empires, attempts to form larger federations failed. Instead Africa got a great number of poor states: as of 1985 there were 54 states, mostly ruled by either corrupt civilians or military juntas. Lack of education, infrastructure and predictable government, as well as decreasing world market prices on Africa's main products, prevented the necessary investments, while improved health services led to a drastic increase in the number of poor people. The only states south of the Sahara that could possibly function as economic locomotives were Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. The former two became ridden by corruption and, in the case of Nigeria, repeated coups, while South Africa was a white European settler state, practising a policy of apartheid against the black majority, and thus unpalatable as a partner for the rest of Africa. Decolonized Africa became an area of widespread tension. In the early 1960s, and particularly from the mid-1970s to the end of the "second cold war", local antagonists successfully invited support from the superpowers.

The seventh and last arm is the constant crisis of the Middle East. The main factors in this crisis were, first, the establishment in 1948 of the state of Israel (a thorn in the Arab flesh); second, the riches gained by exploiting the region's oil resources, vital to the West European and Japanese economies; third, Arab nationalism with its programme of unifying the many states created by the British and the French; and, finally, the Iranian upheavals. Repeated wars were waged against Israel, with the dual aim of defeating the Zionists and using the occasion to unite the Arab world. Iran became an issue of cold war tension as early as 1946; and from the mid-50s, the whole Middle East became a focus of cold war rivalry. The "second cold war" saw the region dominated by a hot war between Iraq and Iran.

I have dwelt upon these seven arms in order to emphasize

to what extent Asia and Africa have their own contemporary history, independent of United States policy and indeed of the 'cold war'. The global rivalry between the superpowers was not the business of most Asians and Africans, who had their own agendas and conflicts. It was in the minds of the Soviets, the Americans and the Europeans that local conflicts were interpreted in terms of a two-camp confrontation. I do not of course mean to say that the policy of the United States was unimportant to Asians and Africans. The USA held enormous resources in the balance. Asian and African leaders therefore had to weigh the costs and benefits of inviting US aid and investments, getting access to the US market, and of allowing the US to have military bases. If such leaders thought the risks were too high, if they wanted to carry out reforms in conflict with American ideals, or if they were unable to obtain US support because their main opponents had got to Washington before them, they could look to Moscow for help instead. But then they had to weigh the risks of US economic sanctions, covert actions, even military intervention. In making such calculations, it was important for the Asian and African leaders to understand the ideological guidelines of US foreign policy. This was not always easy: Americans were definitely different. I shall now try to approach the guidelines of US foreign policy in terms of a "superpower ideology".

### **Ten Cold Commandments**

A state's foreign policy can be interpreted as guided either by national security concerns, economic interests, or ideology. All three factors matter, but most states have first to look after their security; then, if granted, for economic interests abroad, and only in the end consider the possibility of realizing ideological aspirations. However, when a state is sufficiently rich and safe, ideology may take precedence. This, in my view, was what happened to the United States in

the aftermath of the Second World War. The foreign policy elite in Washington was dominated by Europe-oriented realists, programatically opposed to ideology, rhetoric and morality as such. But their pro-European realist schemes evolved into worldwide containment of communism, and this in turn was backed up by rhetoric. Thus a strategically oriented superpower ideology emerged, which projected the concept of national security onto the world at large. US national security became synonymous with defending the "free world", while the conviction developed that ensuring the survival of pro-Western regimes in countries such as South Korea, South Vietnam and Taiwan was "vital" to the security of the United States.

The triumph of the superpower ideology was speeded up by the Soviet subjugation of Eastern Europe, the detonation of a Soviet nuclear bomb, the communist victory in China, and the attraction that communism was gaining in Europe's Asian colonies. When Britain went bankrupt and France went berserk, it should hardly have come as a surprise that many Asians saw communism as the best tool for national liberation. But Washington's superpower ideology cannot be explained only as a reaction to these unwelcome developments. The ideology had deep roots in American culture itself.

Let us now examine the basic ideas in US cold war policies in terms of "ten commandments", and see how they affected Asia and Africa. The first three commandments are not specifically linked to the cold war, but rather form traditional guidelines for US foreign policy: 14:40

The First Commandment:

Thou Shalt Lead the World to Liberty.

Americans seem to have this traditions of seeing their country as the moral leader of the planet. The United States has always been exceptional. It was the land where everything started anew, where old rules were broken and everything was possible. The United States could not be expected to have a normal foreign policy, based on "spheres of influence" or "power politics". It could either try to safeguard its virtue

by withdrawing from the international scene, or it could export its principles, bringing freedom to the world. These two tendencies have been counterpoised in the American rhetorical tradition, but Pearl Harbor signalled a long period of domination by the "policy of liberty and greatness".

During the Second World War, the arms and the rhetoric of the United States made it an attractive alliance partner for nationalists in Asia, and in Africa as well. From their perspective, both the United States and the Soviet Union were champions of the anti-fascist and anti-imperialist cause. However, the onset of the cold war changed the direction of US policy. Instead of targeting the European empires, the American crusade for liberty focused entirely on containing communism, and thus on maintaining the status quo. This undermined the positive image of the United States in much of Asia and Africa, where both elites and peasants were seeking change. For a while, even after the Second World War, radical nationalists hoped for US support, and were willing in return to open their doors to US capital. But soon the Soviet Union came to stand as the main champion of national liberation. This was unfortunate for the US position in Asia and Africa because it placed the United States on the losing side. As the European powers left their colonies, the United States came to appear more as an imperialist successor than as a champion of liberty. True, there were some instances when the United States took action against European policies, such as in Indonesia and Egypt, but even then it acted more like a broker or troubleshooter than a supporter of the nationalist cause. The reluctance of the United States to support Asian and African nationalism also made it difficult for local moderate leaders to gain legitimacy at home. When moderates took over the colonial states from the Europeans, they often had to face radical opposition from young officers, intellectuals or peasant leaders. Such situations often led to brutal oppression.

Cold war considerations constitute the main reason for the redirection of US foreign policy from anti-colonialism to



anti-communism, but another reason was...

The Second Commandment:

Honour Thy European Parents.

The members of the foreign policy elite in the United States were, and still remain, almost entirely of European origin. Among them there has been, and still is, a fair amount of racial prejudice against the Nigger, the Mussulman, the Jap and the Chink. Derogatory attitudes were common. There were degrading attitudes, such as those expressed in much of Harry Truman's early correspondence, and there was the patriarchal kind of prejudice, such as when Roosevelt remarked to Stalin that the Indochinese were 'people of small stature, like the Javanese and Burmese', and that they were 'not warlike'. Racial prejudice was far less pronounced after the Second World War than before, but it survived under the surface. Washington's bonds to foreign policy elites in Europe have until this day remained much closer than to any country in Asia and Africa. Between the United States and Great Britain the partnership in the Second World War developed a 'special relationship'. Let us recall that Christopher Thorne's celebrated study of the British-American alliance against Japan bears the title "Allies of a Kind".

After the Second World War, Washington's fixation on Europe made it tempting to transpose the cold war, which really had mainly to do with Europe and the arms race, to the rest of the world. This meant that since the West-European states were to be supported in Europe, their interests also had to be supported in Asia and Africa. During the Second World War, Roosevelt had toyed with the idea of cooperating with Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek in singling out France as a foe, and placing French colonies under trusteeship. This would no doubt have been a popular policy in Asia, and in Africa as well, but it would have led to serious problems in the British-American relationship. And so the idea was never carried out. Indeed, it met massive resentment in Roosevelt's own Europaphile bureaucracy. Harry Truman buried the proposal, and

instead let France drag the United States into a war that would later make Eisenhower consider the use of atomic bombs, Johnson decline from seeking reelection, and Nixon name his dismal memoirs: 'No More Vietnams'.

Under Roosevelt, there was a clear contradiction between the two first commandments: the world could be led to freedom only by opposing the European parents. The cold war solved this dilemma for Washington by singling out communism as the sole obstacle to liberty. This meant, however, that Washington also had to compromise on its...

Third Commandment:

Thou Shalt Open Every Door.

The "Open Door" policy, as described by the US Secretary of State at the turn of the century, advocated the free use by all nations of the treaty ports in China, and respect for Chinese territorial and administrative integrity. This was to become a central part of the ideology behind US foreign policy. The United States did not want to administer colonies, but to have full and equal access to markets and resources. In 1945 and 1946, the United States used its overriding economic power to create a series of international agreements on currency, loans and trade, based on the principle of open competition.

Initially, the implementation of the open door policy was a great success, but this success was hampered in several ways. First, the communist victory in China led to the establishment of a closed economic system for one fourth of the world's population - the very market that the open doors had been meant to open in the first place. Second, the United States allowed the European powers to maintain special arrangements within their respective empires. This prevented open competition in the very period when the weakness of the European economy could have made it possible for US capital to take more direct control of African and Asian resources. Third, after its independence in 1947, India, with the second largest population in the world, developed its own protected

economic sphere with a non-convertible currency. This move was tolerated by the United States because of the strategic need to prevent neutral India from allying itself too closely with China and the Soviet Union. Fourth, even though the United States had taken full control of Japan, that country was allowed to develop its own autonomous banks and business corporations, and intricate economic structures which were open to American sales and investments only in principle. While the door to the United States was left wide open to Japanese capital, American capital was only to a limited extent able to enter Japan.

In conclusion, then, a policy originally meant to provide access for US capital to China, eventually came to open the United States to Japanese and European capital. To the extent that doors were opened, their openness contributed to the rapid rise of America's main capitalist rivals. The reason why it took so long before this became a political issue between Washington, Tokyo and the European capitals was only partly the strength of US liberalist convictions. It was first and foremost the cold war. US policy towards Japan was dictated by the need to keep an anti-Soviet alliance together, not by US economic interests. This was not understood by the revisionist historians of the 1970s who thought strategies of cold war and strategies of economic exploitation were one and the same. There is little reason to believe that US capitalism depended on communism being contained in Asia and Africa. Indeed, the opposite may be the case: the US economy would have been in better shape today if the United States had allowed communists to seize power in the countries where they were strong enough to do so. Then Washington could have established favourable trade agreements with as many states as possible, communist and non-communist alike. This is what Japan has been doing these past twenty years, within the limits - of course - of US tolerance.

One important factor in convincing Americans that they had to stop the communists wherever they threatened the existing order was...

The Fourth Commandment:Keep Dominoes From Falling.

25:40

With the "domino theory" we leave the three traditional commandments and enter the cold ones. As the cold war intensified in 1949-50, the domino theory became a mainstay of US foreign policy. For some ten to fifteen years, it was central to the way Americans interpreted the world, rivalling the Monroe Doctrine and the Open Door in importance. The image of the falling dominoes was an effectful rhetorical figure, but from a strategic point of view it was a disastrous doctrine. In a row of dominoes every single one counts as much as the other, regardless of its size and regardless of whether it is solid or rotten. With the image of dominoes in their heads, Americans saw states as pawns which were kept standing by the West while Moscow moved to make them fall. The domino theory provided the basis for...

The Fifth Commandment:To Be Credible Thou Must Prove Thy Resolve.

The cold war undermined the image of the good American who stepped in to help friends in dire straits. Instead the term "US imperialism" spread out in the world. It is better to be feared than to be liked, said Machiavelli: If you are liked, others may take advantage of you. A similar philosophy developed in Washington towards the end of the Truman Administration and prevailed under the five following presidents, until Carter made an unsuccessful attempt to revive the "good American". In the ugly period, it was necessary for the United States to demonstrate its "credibility" by showing its resolve. If only America took a firm stand in one place, it might be unnecessary to do it elsewhere, since everyone would then know the backbone of America.

This idea, reinforced by every president's need to impress his own electorate, went in conjunction with the "domino theory". Together they prevented rational withdrawals. By the mid-1960s, US analysts knew that the communists were about to

gain the upper hand in the South Vietnamese countryside. They also knew that the South Vietnamese regime was not worth fighting for: but to withdraw from Vietnam would mean a loss of credibility. And so, Washington engaged US forces in Vietnam not because Vietnam was either economically or strategically important, and not because there was much hope of leading the war to a successful conclusion. The war was fought because withdrawal was inconceivable under the prevailing doctrine. Each and every communist aggression had to be met with an appropriate response.

At the height of the cold war, Washington also pursued a policy of inducing non-communist regimes to join in alliances with mutual obligations to wage war in the case of aggression. This policy resulted from...

The Sixth Commandment:

Make Thy Friends Stick Together.

"Divide and Rule" used to be a watchword for imperial powers who wanted to preserve their hegemony at minimal cost. During the cold war, the United States seemed instead to follow the opposite watchword within its sphere of influence: "Unite and Defend". US tenacity in urging regional cooperation among its allies shows to what extent the United States was willing to sacrifice its own leverage to the superior goal of containing the Soviet Union. Regional cooperation was promoted on both the economic and military levels. Formal alliances were seen as parts of a dyke which was being built around a vast, red lake. Washington does not seem to have feared that its own allies might become assertive and constitute a threat to US hegemony.

The schemes of regional cooperation were not as successful in Asia as in Europe. The South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) of 1954 and the Baghdad Pact of 1955 became nothing like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But in 1967, most former Asian SEATO members formed the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was to achieve considerable success during the "second cold war",

when a perceived threat from Vietnam made it imperative to stand together, and when the United States could no longer be relied upon to stem the local tide. The reason why the USA now lowered its profile in Southeast Asia was partly the defeat in Vietnam, partly the newly established friendship between Washington and Beijing, and partly the over-optimistic...

Seventh Commandment:

Thou Shalt Pay Any Price and Bear Any Burden.

The cold war meant a drain on US resources. At the close of the Second World War, US capabilities were enormous. While the European and Japanese industries had been run down or destroyed, US industry was modernized and working at full steam. Until the 1970s, the dollar was good as gold. After the cold war, the US economy remained strong in absolute terms, but it had lost its hegemony, and the United States had become a debtor nation. By 1989, the average Japanese was producing a value of 2,600 USD more than the average American. Paul Kennedy may have exaggerated US decline in his The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. But the financial problems that haunt Washington today, and the decline of US relative economic power must at least to some extent be explained by military overstretch, and by Washington's generous economic foreign policy towards its main capitalist competitors. Economists disagree as to the economic consequences of the arms race, but the gap between the military budgets of the USA and Japan must have played some part in making up the difference between the Japanese and US balances of trade. To "pay any price and bear any burden" was more than rhetoric; it had a cost.

For much of the cold war period, these seven commandments sufficed, but as an effect of the many problems they generated, in particular the Vietnam debacle, three modifying commandments were added:

The Eighth Commandment:

Thine Enemy's Enemy Can Be Thy Friend.

This commandment ran contrary to unadorned containment by

making it conceivable to have communist friends. An early version of the eighth commandment had led to US support for Tito's Yugoslavia in 1948. In late 1949, there were also those in the US foreign policy establishment who considered the possibility of establishing relations between Washington and the men who just then were taking over in Beijing. Secretary of State Dean Acheson knew that Sino-Soviet relations were not exactly characterized by mutual trust, and speculated that it would be possible to apply a policy of divide and rule towards the communist world. Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung and Ho Chi Minh might become Asian Titos. American scholars have discussed whether or not this constituted a "lost chance". The crux of the matter is that in early 1950, Washington decided that the Chinese and Soviet communists constituted a combined, monolithic threat. Therefore Taiwan was sealed off; assistance was provided to the French in Indochina; and US forces intervened in Korea, crossing the 38th parallel and provoking a Chinese counter-intervention. Sino-American hostility was cemented during the next twenty years.

Only after the Sino-Soviet crisis of the late 1960s did Washington return to the possibility that China might be a friend. Ping-pong diplomacy prepared President Nixon's 1972 visit to the ageing Mao. With this Sino-American rapprochement, the war in Vietnam lost its strategic significance. From 1968-69, it was no longer possible to see Vietnam as a pawn in a row of dominoes stretching from Moscow through Beijing to Phnom Penh, Bangkok and Singapore. The fall of the domino theory, in combination with financial constraints, and the growing antiwar movement in the United States, can explain the Paris settlement of 1973, and the fact that the United States did not intervene two years later, when Saigon "fell".

The 1970s saw general détente both in Soviet-American and Sino-American relations. When the "second cold war" erupted between Moscow and Washington in 1978, continued Sino-American friendship made the constellation far more favourable from a US point of view than it had been in the 1950s and 1960s. This was effectively exploited by the administration of President

Reagan and Vice-President Bush who, with the hindsight of the failure in Vietnam, adopted the lengthy...

Ninth Commandment:

Hit Hard or Act Covertly, and Make Others Pay Their Share. 36:30

The experience of the Vietnam War taught the US to be more patient and more cynical: hit harder whenever it hit, let local guerrillas take care of the long-term fighting, and make others pay some of the bills. These lessons were applied in relation to the hot spots of the "second cold war". In Iran, which had been a cornerstone of the Pentagon's Middle Eastern strategy, the United States allowed an anti-American Islamic state to be established, with no other intervention than a failed attempt to rescue hostages. During most of what remained of the cold war, Washington watched the Iranians and Iraqi fight each other without making a cold war issue of it. In Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia and Angola, the United States successfully contributed to the destabilization of pro-Soviet regimes by sustaining local guerrillas. "Low-intensity warfare", with its patent break of all the principles of jus in bello, was 'turned around' and used to subvert Marxist regimes. An attempt was even made to finance destabilisation of a regime in Washington's own hemisphere by arms sales in another. As long as the final round of the cold war lasted, it was only in its own backyard that the United States practised the accompanying doctrine of 'hitting hard enough to win quickly', but once the cold war was over, the stage was set for using the doctrine also in the Middle East - with authorization from the United Nations, an Arab-European coalition, and loans as well as high-tech computer chips from Japan.

Since at this point there is a risk that I may leave my topic and become unduly polemical, I shall make a rapid return to my profession by citing the final...

Tenth Commandment:

Examine Every Trail Thou Hast Left.

In the United States of America, scholars, journalists, auth-



ors and filmmakers, even military officers and politicians, have developed an impressive capacity for national psychoanalysis, for questioning and scrutinizing the nation's deeds and misdeeds in the recent past. That this is something genuinely American becomes manifest when we compare the many US books and films about Vietnam with the scanty attempts to reassess the French experience in Indochina and Algeria. In France, the various political camps repeat their own predictable versions, while in the United States, there are genuine quarrels and dialogues.

One important effect of US cold war policy was to raise the quality of American diplomatic history, in particular the branch of it that deals with US policy towards Asia. By contrast, Africa remains largely ignored. After the Vietnam War, there was a five or six years period when Vietnam was a sort of taboo; this was also a time when diplomatic history was considered antiquated. Historians were meant to deal with conditions, structures, longue durée and world systems, not with actions and events. But strangely enough, in the midst of the anti-evenemential mode, a stream of high-quality diplomatic historical studies appeared, leading Warren I. Cohen to declare in 1985 that the history of American-East Asian relations had become the "cutting edge of the historical profession".

With success follows controversy over theoretical frameworks and the focus of interest. US diplomatic historians were criticized by their European colleagues for being parochial, for focusing on what went on in the State Department instead of out there in the real world. These accusations led to a discussion of whether US diplomatic history should remain a part of American history or become 'international history'. In the former case, the focus would be mainly on the causes of US policies and on the policy-making process as such. In the second case, researchers would transcend borders and look at the interplay between the United States and other powers, and try to assess the impact of what Americans did. Since the latter approach is the one that I am hoping will prevail, I

shall round off this lecture by suggesting three major impacts of US cold war policies in Asia and Africa.

### **Three Fallouts**

First, the peoples whose leaders bet on the wrong horse in the cold war were made to suffer. This does not mean that United States actions were the main reason for their suffering: most conflicts were primarily of local origin. But by globalizing local conflicts and committing its own material and human resources to the side that sought Western support, the United States escalated and prolonged local conflicts, first of all in Korea and Vietnam, but elsewhere as well.

Second, strategically placed regimes which aligned themselves with the United States benefited from their loyalty. They received civilian and military aid, obtained the status of most favoured nations in their trade relations, and received substantial revenues from providing the United States with military bases. At the end of the cold war, the strategically placed US allies came out as the main winners: if we discount Europe, the strategic benefactors of the cold war include Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, the ASEAN countries, Taiwan, South Korea, and above all: Japan. India also got its share, by remaining neutral and accepting support from both superpowers. Even Red China came to benefit economically from its realignment in 1972.

Third, the cold war contributed to undermining US hegemony within the capitalist world. The eight first commandments made the United States pursue an over-ambitious superpower strategy rather than looking after its own interests. This undermined US relative power by stimulating growth in Europe and the Far East. The cynical ninth and the psychoanalytical tenth commandments did something to rectify this, but too late to save US supremacy. With the sudden breakup of the Soviet empire between 1989 and 1991, and the manifestation of US military might in the Gulf, the United States could again

assume the posture of a winner - but that image is unlikely to last long. The cold war had two great winners: Europe and Japan. In the first decades of the 21st century, US policy towards Asia and Africa will have to be formulated in consultation or conflict with Tokyo and Brussels (or perhaps Berlin).

Future decision-makers in Washington will need to modify the first US commandment, and make do with something less than exceptional greatness:

Thou Shalt Be One Corner in a Triangular World.

45:00