

the people of Taiwan, but he acknowledged that China was "most unlikely to make a commitment to the United States not to use force in carrying out Taiwan's ultimate liberation."

Despite their protestations of concern for Taiwan, the advocates of recognition now seem agreed that the price to be paid is formal submission to Peking's insistence that the future of Taiwan is purely an internal question. (It is little more than a clever debating ploy to argue that Taipei agrees with this formula. Taipei's claim to the mainland is, by almost universal agreement, incredible, nothing more than a residual cold war fantasy. Peking's ability to act upon its claim to Taiwan, however, is ominously credible.) It would seem more honest were the proponents of recognition now to say forthrightly that they believe an independent and secure future for Taiwan is no longer in the cards. It only obscures the issue for Senator Kennedy and others to speak about unilateral assurances to Taiwan. After the U.S. has broken the most solemn formal agreements, why should Taiwan put its faith in informal assurances? If the present low-level leverage that Peking has with Washington is enough to force such American concessions over Taiwan, can anyone really imagine that the U.S. would be prepared to risk a major military confrontation with China in defense of Taiwan? Senator Kennedy should have the nerve of the *Realpolitik* he proposes. Broken down to its simple parts, the argument for recognition now goes like this: "For compelling reasons—political, military, and economic—it is urgent that the U.S. have full diplomatic relations with China. The status of Taiwan is the chief obstacle to such relations. In view of that fact, and despite our long history of association and our formal agreements, the protection of an independent Taiwan is no longer in the interests of the U.S. Sorry about that." So stated, without any obfuscating sentimentality about friendship with the people of Taiwan, the question of recognition now can be debated more honestly.

We believe that in principle it would be a good thing for the U.S. and China to have normal diplomatic relations. The present political convulsions inside China likely make this the least propitious time to try to resolve the difficulties in the way of such normalization. The success of diplomacy consists not in the striking of agreements but in striking agreements that are in accord with U.S. interests and ideals. A successful agreement with Peking should enhance the clarity of America's commitment on human rights, should avoid any suggestion of U.S. lack of reliability, and, implicit in both of these, should assure the independent future of Taiwan. We must speak cautiously about the importance of American credibility, remembering that that was the argument, pressed too exclusively, that kept us in Vietnam so long. But there should be no question about our determination to protect the well-being of the too easily forgotten people of Taiwan. An agreement with Peking that would meet these interests and

ideals does not seem possible now. Perhaps it will be possible three years from now. But if three or even five years from now there is not full normalization between Peking and Washington, that is less of a price to pay than the price that would almost certainly be required to reach an agreement now.

So the symbolists, so to speak, are wrong on the Panama Canal treaty and the pragmatists are right. U.S. interests seem to be protected, and if some people want to see the treaty as a defeat of U.S. imperialism, well, we should be a wise and strong enough nation not to fret about that. The rhetorical ammunition the treaty may give to inveterate anti-Americans is as nothing compared to the ammunition they would have were the Senate to succumb to conservative insistence upon our "ownership" of a slice of Latin America.

But, with due respect for the importance of Panama, it does not compare with the magnitude of the questions involved in our relations with China and Taiwan. On the canal treaty a little piece of American pride may be at stake. On the China question the future liberty and well-being of seventeen million people are at stake. In rushing to formal recognition, the pragmatists seem to be in too much of a hurry. Full normalization of relations is not necessary now. Politically and economically, we have little or nothing to gain from it that we do not have now in the *de facto* recognition that exists between Washington and Peking. Above all, it would not be honorable to pay the price that Peking has, at least so far, demanded. It would be a denial of justice to the people of Taiwan and to people elsewhere who believe, rightly or wrongly, that their interests and ideals depend upon solidarity with the United States of America.

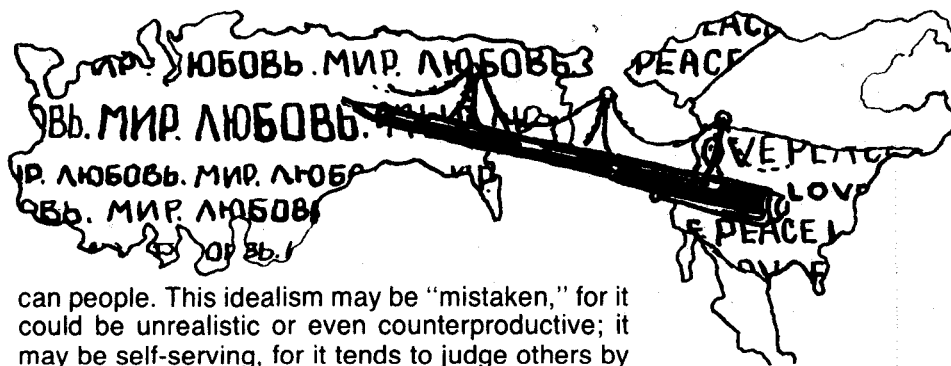
EXCURSUS II

Walter C. Clemens, Jr.
An Open Letter to Leonid Brezhnev

Dear General Secretary Brezhnev:

You and your colleagues are no doubt puzzled and angered by the Carter administration's active support of human rights in the USSR and elsewhere. Your comrades ask: "How can Americans criticize our Socialist civilization when the United States is pockmarked with poverty and injustice?" "Will Carter risk world peace for the sake of a few renegades rejected by their own people?" "Is this a hypocritical crusade to divert the American masses from the scandals and privations generated by their bourgeois system?"

You and other Soviet leaders have visited not only in Washington but in San Clemente. But your talks with Messrs. Nixon and Kissinger may not have acquainted you with the deep idealism of the Ameri-



Oleg Egorov

can people. This idealism may be "mistaken," for it could be unrealistic or even counterproductive; it may be self-serving, for it tends to judge others by our own values. But it remains a fact of life, a recurring phenomenon from our first laws to ensure religious liberty, to the Declaration of Independence, through our movements to abolish slavery, to establish a League to Enforce the Peace, to prohibit alcoholic beverages, to create a United Nations, to internationalize atomic energy, to integrate schools, and to end discrimination against women, the elderly, ethnic minorities, and homosexuals. Indeed, this idealism helps explain why we now spend more on education than defense, for we want to abolish ignorance and poverty as well as ensure the political and civil liberties of every citizen.

Our idealism runs in waves. Both at home and abroad we alternate between vigorous campaigns to change the human condition and breathing periods for rest and consolidation. This pattern can be misleading for other governments as we lurch from isolationism to interventionism. Thus Eisenhower's quietism gave way to the exuberance of the New Frontier and Great Society. When the idealism of the Great Society was lost in the swamps of Indochina, we turned to an arch pragmatist—Richard Nixon.

Though you found some common understanding with Mr. Nixon, many Americans doubted his basic integrity. Though you saw the Watergate affair as a trifle, blown out of proportion by Nixon's enemies and by foes of détente, many here saw it as symptomatic of a sick—even evil—administration.

After Nixon brought us to the brink of mass cynicism Ford restored an image of simple decency to the presidency. But the pendulum swung still farther, for Ford did little to inspire the American soul. Carter pledged an administration not only honest but activist. He promises to fuse as no leader since John Kennedy the intellect and the spirit, making the ideal practical.

Mr. Carter wants to concentrate on domestic problems. Abroad he seeks to facilitate world trade and arms control, while upgrading human rights.

Please do not read all this as a campaign to destroy Communist rule in the USSR. Most Americans understand that many peoples reject private enterprise and want more government economic control than we. Nor do we insist on a two-party democracy as the standard for every political system.

What we do want to know is: "How does a given system affect the lives of its citizens? How well does it nourish their economic and environmental well-

being using the resources available? Does it permit the individual to choose and develop his destiny?"

Why does Carter's human rights position strike a deep chord in American opinion? Frankly, we are sick and tired of our government sidling up to every right-wing dictatorship from Saigon to Santiago and justifying these dalliances by our common struggle against communism. But devotion to peace does not make us less critical of presidential bear hugs with leftist authoritarians.

We are working to clean up our own country, from conflicts of interest in Washington to land rights of Native Americans. We welcome outside judgment on the degree to which our ways conform to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, and, not least, our own Constitution. May we not ask you to stand by international obligations to which your government has also subscribed?

Please do not take this as a declaration of cold war. Take it as a challenge to make your own pledged ideals a reality. (Do you recall the waves of public enthusiasm originally generated by the Soviet Constitution in 1936?)

By now the foundations of Soviet power are fairly secure. Grant your people the right to speak and act their minds and your rule may become more popular, especially as the juices of economic, scientific, and cultural energy flow more freely. This, you may recall, happened in Dubček's Czechoslovakia when one poll after another showed a rising tide of public support for the Communist Party as the best guarantee for democracy, prior to your intervention in August, 1968.

In 1968 there was a youth rebellion in many countries. Today there is a similar ground swell among all ages for human rights. Will your Politburo serve in the avant-garde or (again) as the gendarme of reaction?

If some comrades charge that you opened a hornet's nest by signing the Helsinki Final Act, you could answer that your Politburo wants to ensure not only the physical safety of the Soviet people by its "Peace Programme" but also the true freedom promised long ago by Socialist visionaries wanting to break the chains—spiritual as well as material—that bind humanity.

Walter C. Clemens, Jr., is a Fellow of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Smithsonian Institution.