

Ronald Steel

Amerikanische Diplomatie und politische Kultur



Geboren 1931 in Morris, Illinois, USA. Professor an der School of International Relations, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Studium an der Northwestern University, der Sorbonne und der Harvard University. Historiker und Biograph: Amerikanische Politik und Kultur. Buchveröffentlichungen: *Walter Lippman and the American Century* (1980), *Imperialists and Other Heroes* (1970), *Pax Americana* (1967), *The End of Alliance* (1964). Adresse: School of International Relations, University of Southern California, University Park-MC 0043, Von Kleinsmid Center 330, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0043, USA.

I came to the Wissenschaftskolleg with several intentions: to write some essays on American diplomacy and political culture during the period since the First World War, to prepare for publication a book of essays on that period, to do research on a study of Robert Kennedy and American society during the 1960s, and to gain a greater understanding of German society through encounters with scholars at the Kolleg and an extended period of residence in Berlin.

During the course of the year I feel that I made considerable progress toward all of these objectives. Among the essays I wrote were those on William Bullitt, an American diplomat who played a critical role in relations with Germany and the Soviet Union; Paul Nitze, a key figure in the formation of US postwar foreign policy; and the American experience in Vietnam. In addition I did a study, which I presented as a colloquium paper, of the "containment doctrine" as the focal point of US policy toward the Soviet Union from the 1917 revolution to the present. This paper used the careers of three key officials — Bullitt, Nitze and George Kennan — to examine the doctrine, its origins, its assumptions, its strategies and its implications.

Further, I used the splendid facilities of the library at the John F. Kennedy Institute of American Studies at the Free University of Berlin to do research on Robert Kennedy and American politics of the 1960s. In this regard I benefited from encounters and discussions with scholars at the Institute and at other facilities in Berlin. With regard to my other objec-

tive of understanding German society, I can say that I made a certain degree of progress, but that my fascination with the subject increased exponentially with my understanding of it. Clearly a great deal more work remains for me to do in this area, and I am looking forward to the research and field work it entails.

While in Berlin I had many discussions with other Fellows, with scholars at the Free University and other German institutions, and with people in politics and the arts. I participated in several seminars at the Aspen Institut in Berlin on aspects of US-European and inter-European relations. I also gave several talks on these topics, including those at the VolksUni and the Free University. On a number of occasions I went to East Berlin to meet both government officials and private persons. My residence at the Kolleg made possible all of these encounters, and I found them of immense usefulness, both professionally and intellectually.

Being at the Kolleg, having daily encounters with colleagues in a variety of fields, and living in Berlin, helped me to gain a broader perspective on both European society and my own. For me one of the most important aspects of the Kolleg is not only the wonderful freedom it offers to pursue one's own work, but the opportunity to be together with people of enormous accomplishment in areas different from one's own. I learned a great deal from being among scientists and philosophers, novelists and musicians.

My year at the Kolleg was a wonderfully enriching and rewarding experience. It offered not only freedom, but structure, participation and encounter. It expanded the scope of my intellectual inquiry, made me look for different questions, and also for different answers.