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PUBLIC OPINION AND MILITARY PLANNERS

6 May 1949

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION--Major General Arthur W. Vanaman, Commandant, ICAF.....	1
SPEAKER--General J. Lawton Collins, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army.....	1
GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	10

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GENERAL VANAMAN: Gentlemen, public opinion is important. Personally, I like the evaluation that Talleyrand, in the eighteenth century, put on public opinion. He said, in the Chamber of Peers, something like this: "I know where there is more wisdom to be found than in Napoleon, in Voltaire, in all the ministers, present and to come—in public opinion." That was his evaluation back in the eighteenth century, and things have changed quite a bit: Public opinion is of still more importance now.

During this year we have emphasized the relationship between public opinion and high-level planning. We have learned much from civilian experts. Today we have the opportunity of learning from an expert from the Armed Forces, who qualifies by an outstandingly brilliant career—in public opinion, in high-level planning, as well as in combat operations.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome back to the platform of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and to introduce to you one of our most distinguished graduates, General J. Lawton Collins.

GENERAL COLLINS: Thank you, General Vanaman.

As we walked along the corridor coming here just now, I asked General Vanaman where we were going to have this discussion this morning. When he told me it was going to be in this little hall, I said: "Grand! That will certainly make me feel at home again." When I came in, I made right for one of the corner seats over here, where I had sat for four years during one of the most stimulating periods of my life, as I was an instructor in the old Army War College.

It is nice to be back here and, also, to be addressing a class of the Industrial College, from which I had the privilege of graduating back in about 1937, when it was located in the old Munitions Building.

As I looked over the prospectus, we might say, for this talk last night, I noted that the scope of this talk was to cover the evolution of military thinking with respect to public opinion and its effect on military planning. It did not specify the evolution of military thinking particularly, but I believe that is what Colonel Babcock had in mind when he wrote that set of instructions. But as I

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thought the matter over, I was impressed that if we limited the discussion solely to the evolution in military thinking, we would be making a mistake, because two sterics immediately came to my mind, one illustrative of the change in the military approach to public opinion, but another that reflected at least the need of a change in the approach of thinking out in civil life with respect to military matters. There is bound to be an interrelationship between those two points of view; one affects the other. I think that will serve as the keynote to what I have to say.

I am not going to read all the text of the tome I brought here. It is not the Bible. It has something which I want to read to you as the first of these illustrations.

Some of you are old enough to remember, I am sure, the days leading up to the First World War, when, for the first time really, the American people were confronted with an international situation about which they had to do something, and they did not like it a bit. Not only did the public at large not like it, but even the President of the United States, Mr. Wilson, did not like it. Remember, Mr. Wilson had been President of Princeton University.

What I am going to read to you may surprise you. This is from a memorandum by General Bliss, who was then the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army:

"It was early in the autumn of 1915. I was Acting Chief of Staff. Mr. Breckinridge was, for a day or two, Acting Secretary of War. He came into my office early one morning and said that the President had summoned him a few minutes before. He found him holding a copy of the Baltimore Sun in his hand, 'trembling and white with passion.' The President pointed to a little paragraph of two lines in an out-of-the-way part of a sheet, evidently put in just to fill space. It read something like this: 'It is understood that the General Staff is preparing a plan in the event of war with Germany.'

"The President asked Mr. Breckinridge if he supposed that was true. Mr. Breckinridge said that he did not know. The President directed him to make an immediate investigation and, if it proved true, to relieve at once every officer of the General Staff and order him out of Washington. Mr. Breckinridge put the investigation up to me.

"I told him that the law creating the General Staff made it its duty 'to prepare plans for the national defense'; that I was President of the War College when the General Staff was organized in 1903; that from that time till then the College had studied over and over again plans for war with Germany, England, France, Italy, Japan,

Mexico, etc. I said that if the President took the action threatened, it would only make patent to everybody what pretty much everybody already knew and would create a great political row, and, finally, it would be absurd.

"I think the President realized this in a cooler moment. Nothing further was said to him about the matter, nor did he again mention it. But Mr. Breckinridge directed me to caution the War College--"

Which, at that time, was really the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff--

"to 'camouflage' its work. It resulted in practically no further official studies."

That, to my mind, is really an amazing thing. That happened not so long ago--in 1915. Here was the President of the United States shocked at the idea that anybody in Washington was considering or planning for a possible war with Germany, which we got into two years later. This reflected, I am sure, not all of American public opinion, but, certainly, Mr. Wilson was no dullard, and he certainly reflected a large segment of American public opinion with respect to the "perfidy" of military planning.

Why was it that way? Why did the public have such a point of view? My second story, I believe, will illustrate this point.

My first contact with the whole business of public opinion, at least my first conscious contact with it, occurred quite a few years ago when I was the G-2 and G-3 of the Philippine Division stationed at Fort McKinley in the Philippines. We had no public relations officer in those days. We were not very lush in our staff. So I was not only the G-2 but also the G-3 and the public relations officer of the division.

One evening, at about ten o'clock, I had a call from the editor of the leading Manila newspaper. I knew him only slightly. He said that he had just opened a "letter to the editor" in which the writer complained that we had an epidemic of infantile paralysis at Fort McKinley, that we were doing nothing about it, that we were sending our children into the schools of Manila, and that we were thereby endangering the lives of the children of Manila. He asked me what it was all about, whether there was any truth to it. I assured him that we had no epidemic really and said, "Just wait a few minutes. I'll check with the doctor and call you back and let you know."

Then, as I hung up, I thought I had better check with the Chief of Staff to see if there was any possible objection to doing this.

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I called the Chief of Staff on the phone. He was a much older man, a very fine soldier but, frankly, a soldier of the old school. When I told him this, his reaction was very prompt. He said, "Joe, don't tell them anything. It's none of their damned business." "Colonel," I said, "I think we would be making a terrible mistake if we took that attitude." He said, "No. We know what we are doing out here. Don't tell them anything." I said, "Do you mind if I talk to the General about it?" He said, "No, not at all. Go ahead."

I called General Cochran on the phone. Fortunately, he was a man of very much different ilk—bread, understanding, tremendously capable—and his reply was equally prompt in exactly the opposite direction. He said, "Sure, get hold of the doctor. Get all the information and give it to them."

I got the doctor on the phone and then called the editor in a few moments. I think we had had about 11 cases of infantile paralysis on the post in the preceding 6 months, which number actually represented a lower percentage than they had in Manila. I told him that. I told him that we were doing something about it. We were checking our school children repeatedly to be sure everything was correctly handled. Of course, the editor thanked me and never published the letter. But suppose I had given him the first answer. You can well imagine what would have been the result.

The approach of the old colonel was not universally true in the Army by any manner of means. Nevertheless, it did indicate the opinion of a large segment of the old officer corps of the Army. I imagine it would be somewhat the same in the Navy, although we always think that the Navy handles its public relations far better than we do. Maybe it is the case of the other fellow's side of the road looking better. When I used to be badgered by our Secretary for our poor approach to public opinion, the Navy people, at the same time, would come over and say, "Joe, how in the world do you fellows do it?"

At any rate, I am sure that a large part of the public's skepticism about the military was due to the fact that the military did not take the public into its confidence, it did not let them know what our problems were, it did not explain to them the utter essentiality of planning ahead of time, and it did not give them some grasp of the depth and profundity of these military problems, which react on what the country does and what it can do from a military point of view. It seems to me that is the important thing to understand.

War is far too vast a problem to be solved just by you and me--the people in uniform. It is not our responsibility wholly, by any manner of means. The military part of national security is only one segment of it. Economic security and industrial security play just as profound a part as

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does the military. If we expect the public at large, if we expect the Congress, and if we expect the members of the other governmental departments to understand our problems, then we must share with them our knowledge of these intricate things.

I scribbled down a few notes. I hope you will pardon me for occasionally checking with them. I have not had time to prepare a formal talk because I have quite a few things to do these days. I may wander around a little.

There has been an evolution, of course, in the public's approach to the military. Part of this has resulted from the fact that the press, radio, television, and the movies, particularly the newsreels, have brought right into the homes of the American people some of our foreign relations problems, which are the basis, really, for our military policy. Another great influence, it seems to me, is the ex-GI.

We had about 12 million men in the Armed Forces during the past war. During that period, a large number of them, for the first time in their lives, got beyond the bounds of this country. They "saw the world" literally--all phases and every sector of it--and they returned to this country with a far clearer grasp of the international situation than Americans had ever had before.

I have been tremendously impressed with the young veterans who have been entering Congress. They are as keen and as competent a group of young men as I have seen enter this Congress. They are tremendously interested in what we are doing. I think they are going to have a profound influence on what the public thinks and on the public's understanding of some of our military problems.

We still have a long way to go within the Armed Forces before, as I say, we can convert and make understand not only the other governmental departments here in Washington with which we have to do business but also those within the Army itself, within the Armed Forces.

I will probably refer to the Army during most of my talk because that is where my experience has been, but I am trying to speak from the point of view of the Armed Forces at large.

Fortunately, we have had a tremendous change in our relationships with the State Department since the war. There is a very close relationship today, and I think it is utterly essential that there be such a close relationship. Military planning and strategy must be in consonance with what the national objectives of this country are. If they are not, then they are worthless. And, of course, the foreign policy must be decided by the President through the Executive departments of the Government,

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principally the State Department, in consultation with the foreign relations committees up on the "Hill." In years gone by, there was not too close a relationship, frankly, between the State Department and what went on in the Department of the Navy and the Department of the Army. There has been a great change in the approach since those days, and this College and the National War College have had something to do with that.

I don't know whether you have State Department members here at this school. It would be well if you did. Certainly, there ought to be some from the Commerce Department here in the school.

In the National War College now, I think there are 10 career men from the State Department who take the entire course. When I was instructor here, we occasionally persuaded one to come down. After he had about three or four months of the course, the State Department, thinking he was wasting his time, would call him back. Then again, we were not so sure we wanted the State Department man to know anything about the military planning we did during the latter part of the course. Again, there was that mutual distrust I spoke of, which, thank God, is gradually being broken down. So that now there are in the class at the War College about 10 members from the State Department, and they take the entire course, including that part devoted solely to strategic planning.

Within the Army itself, and within the Armed Forces, though, we still have a problem of making our senior commanders, particularly, understand the profound influence of public opinion on what we are able to do in the Armed Forces. I would like to give you some specific examples.

First of all, in the purely administrative field--and we must do planning for administration as well as for strategic work--if there is any one thing that makes the public today skeptical about the military, it is their fear that, because of the occupation duties, because of the appointment of General Marshall as Secretary of State, because of the appointment of Admiral Kirk and General Bedell Smith as ambassadors, and so on, the military is going to get too great a hold on the civilian control of this country, that we in uniform will gradually get out of our proper sphere, that we will gradually assume powers that we should not have in a democracy. That is a real fear, and it is one that, frankly, I hope the public at large will always have. I don't think any of us want to live under a form of government in which the military is not subservient to the civil authority.

Yet, just recently, the Army arrested two civilians who had escaped from military control in Germany through one subterfuge or another and had actually gotten back here to the United States, without, so far as I know, ever having referred the matter to anyone in top command in the Army, other than the judge advocate. I don't believe any of the Secretaries and certainly neither General Bradley nor I, know anything about it. A military policeman arrested those two civilians in their homes, and, I think, without a warrant.

I was talking this over with an Army commander just the other day. I was terribly shocked when I read about it. I was outside of Washington when I first heard of it, as I recall. This Army commander said he had received these instructions from a certain office here in the Department, that the matter had been checked, and that, legally and technically, the military was correct, it actually could seize those men and ship them back to Germany. He said he had talked to the military policeman who had made the arrest, a senior officer, and asked him what had occurred. The military policeman said that when he had taken these men into custody, some of the press heard about it and came around and asked if he had a warrant for the arrest. This officer said, "What did you say to that?" "Oh," he answered, "I referred them to the PIO,"--the public information officer. Too late; much too late; much, much, much too late. That incident is going to hurt us; it is going to hurt the military badly.

Legally and technically, the Army probably was within its proper grounds, but someone should have said along the line, "Wait a minute, boys. Wait a minute. Let's think of what the reaction on the American public is going to be if we military people seize these fellows without a warrant." If it had to be done, it should have been done by the FBI and not by any military policeman. We, perhaps, should have weighed the relative importance of not having them taken by anybody in comparison with the adverse effect of the whole business on the American public opinion.

Right after the war we had a tremendous amount of difficulty with the question of the caste system in the Army. During that period, the extreme left-wingers had full control of the press and of the public reaction. The Services had not come completely out in the open at that stage of the game. They were having a heyday, and, as usual, they picked on the Army. We seem to be a bigger, more vulnerable target. We are a little closer, perhaps, to the people. At the height of the hubbub about the caste system, I think the general idea was that everybody in the Army was going to be the same. Everybody was going to have the same uniform, we were going to do away with insignia. We were not going to have any clubs for officers as distinguished from clubs for privates, and so on. It happened that there is a caste system in any industrial firm, including the newspaper business. Nevertheless, we were up to our necks trying to combat that thing.

Just about that time somebody in the Quartermaster General's office decided that this was a good moment to get rid of some surplus nylon stockings which the Quartermaster had left over from the war and which were directed to be sold or disposed of in some way where there was a far greater need than in the MACS, the Wives, or anywhere else. He thought the way to do it would be to put them on sale at the Quartermaster sales store right here at the War College, to make them available for sale to the wives of officers and just one or two other categories.

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These nylon stockings were terribly scarce in those days. Just before the sale occurred, one of the firms on F Street had gotten a consignment of about a thousand pairs. In order to give the working girls a chance to buy these things, the firm put on a special sale beginning at five-thirty in the afternoon, after the other shops had closed. A line began to form there on F Street about two-thirty in the afternoon, and by the time five-thirty came, it ran around the block once or twice. The police had to be called out to keep the women in order. When the firm opened the front door, the women went through the front window also. After selling about a hundred pairs, the firm had to call the whole thing off. That epitomizes how highly these nylon stockings figured in public opinion in those days.

A week later the nylon stockings were put on sale here to officers' wives only. About two days later an enterprising newspaperman heard of this and I think it was the "Washington News" that came out with a whole page devoted to nylon stockings and WACs and officers' wives.

Of course, as soon as they heard about it over in the Pentagon, they promptly explained that the WACs were given these things; they did not have to buy them; the stockings were issued to them. That was perfectly true, but the damage had already been done. It had a profound effect upon this whole question. We had to struggle to beat that thing. Nobody had consulted the public relations man; nobody had thought about the effect of this action on the public.

I could go on and on giving you examples of a similar kind that are still occurring. The first incident I mentioned occurred only about a week ago.

Now, that is not too bad when it affects only the administrative part of our business, although it is bad enough, because our bread and butter comes from appropriations; our bread and butter comes from what the public thinks of us. But it is even more serious when we fail to think about the effect of such matters on our strategy on defense measures. I would like to give you some examples in this field. Fortunately, these have not been too much in the way of error.

(Remainder of this phase of presentation was off the record.)

What are we going to do about it? How can you do something about it?

First of all, we must interest the top people in the Government in these problems. The unification of last year provided for a National Security Council headed by the President and made up of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Chairman of the National Security Resources Board;

and other members of the Cabinet and what not can be called in. These matters can now be discussed at that top level by a permanent organization. I hope they consider some of these problems we have just been discussing.

Below that we have the other agencies that are set up, coming down to the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary of Defense has now coordinated within his office the various press relations groups of Army, Navy, and Air. I am sure Mr. Johnson is not doing that in order to suppress news. He was immediately accused of it, but that is definitely not the case. In order to build up public confidence in the Services, he must see that there are fewer of these aberrations, these extreme cases of service rivalry. Whoever finally heads that--Mr. Bill Frye heads it right now--must have access to Mr. Johnson himself directly at any stage of the game because he is the man who now has to watch, for Mr. Johnson, this play of public opinion on whatever is being done in that office.

I don't know how the other Services are organized, but a few years ago we set up in the Department of the Army a Chief of Public Information. He did not head only the Public Information Division. He had three agencies under him. He had the Public Information Division, the Information and Education Division, which has to do with informing the enlisted men and officers of the Army themselves as well as with their broader education, and the Legislation and Liaison Division, which has to do with keeping the Congress informed. In other words, we set up those three agencies under one man: an agency to inform the public, an agency to inform the soldier, and an agency to inform the Congress.

It happened that I was assigned as the first Chief of Public Information—a three-star general, not just a major or a colonel or a brigadier general. They could have found a number of them who could have done the job just as well as I. But based on the recommendation of a civilian advisor, not a military man, it was decided to put one of the senior officers in the Department at the head of this organization, for one reason—to insure that he would sit in with the top councils of the Department of the Army. I attended meetings with the Secretary of War and the meetings with the Chief of Staff on all important matters—not just public opinion problems; all important problems that came up, whether they had to do with strategic planning or any other kind of planning. At times I was able to say, when something was projected, "Wait a minute. Have you thought what the effect of this is going to be on public opinion? Maybe we ought not to do it that way. Or if we have to do it, before we spill this thing, before we go too far, let's condition the public, let's get ready to explain to them and to the Congress what we are driving at, so that we will have a sympathetic reaction to whatever it is we are endeavoring to do."

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Now, with the consolidation of public information in the Secretary of Defense's office and with the transfer to the Secretary of Defense of the information and education program, which is now servicewide instead of being just an Army program, I doubt that we can keep a three-star man on that job. In fact, I am sure we cannot. Nevertheless, we will have someone there who will be the watchdog to see that we do consider these matters as they come along.

We were also trying to educate our officers throughout the Army along this line. We now have courses in each of our Army schools on the importance of public opinion, starting at West Point, the Infantry School, the Field Artillery School, and the Command and the General Staff College. Every one of them has a short course, at any rate, on the importance of public opinion.

We have an Armed Forces Information School at Carlisle, where we train young officers, including noncommissioned officers, in the business of acting as public information men. We hope to get there not only men whose fields are limited to public information; we would like to send all the prospective generals in the Army to Carlisle to take that course so that when they do become generals, maybe they will remember the fact that there is an American public out here, who is gauging what we are doing, who has to be informed as to what we are trying to do in the Army, and without whose support we cannot do anything.

Thank you.

COLONEL BABCOCK: Gentlemen, we are ready for questions.

QUESTION: General, officers in staff and planning positions, many of which will be occupied in the future by graduates of the Industrial College, will doubtless be called upon to discuss subjects in which it is possible, even probable, that some reference may be made to classified material in which the audience would be vitally interested. That might be made the target of unfavorable publicity by some enterprising reporter to the eventual detriment of the officer's career. Would you please explain how officers in this category may safely comment publicly and extemporaneously to the benefit of the Armed Forces without the possibility of thus endangering their careers?

GENERAL COLLINS: What one can and cannot say in the realm of security is always the bugaboo of the public relations man, of course.

I think General Eisenhower set a wonderful standard in that respect during the war, and I thoroughly subscribe to his point of view. He told the press just about everything. Of course, we had an Espionage Act on the books under which anybody who broke that

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security could be tried. So far as I know, there were only two instances during the entire war when that act was violated. But in normal times of peace the Government would be loath to apply any such treatment, I am sure.

It is a question of judgment as to what you can say and what you cannot say, and, of course, that is always a difficult thing.

What we have tried to do in the Army to get around your problem is this: Such announcements as are made by the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff, and other senior people, that involve security, have to be cleared. Once they are cleared and given either in the form of testimony in an open hearing on the "Hill" or in a public speech, we send copies to all our senior officers in the Army and to all our officers who are out by themselves, such as people on duty with the National Guard and the Organized Reserves.

While I was Chief of Public Information, we installed a system of briefs, you might say, on all major subjects. We sent them around to this same group of people from time to time so that if they were going to give a talk, they could check up and see what had already been said. We urged them to paraphrase these speeches of the Secretary and of the Chief of Staff.

You know, after all, when we get past the Alleghenies, we get, in a sense, into a different world. The "New York Times" and the "Washington Post" print these things in full, but the farther we get away from Washington, the smaller and smaller the reports become. So if General Bradley has made a wonderful speech and you are in Oshkosh or some other such place, all you have to do is change the opening paragraph and a word or two here and there and you have a brand-new speech, so far as that community is concerned, and you know it is going to be a good speech.

We have tried to do it that way. That is not a substitute for good judgment, but it at least gives the fellow out on the ground something he can tie to.

My own personal belief is that we are too security-conscious for our own good. We ought to say more; we ought to be more frank than we are. I just don't believe in this business of being afraid of our shadows. I think we would get along much better, we would have better public support, if we were far more frank and open.

I would like to digress for just a minute to give you this illustration: We were very proud during the war of these insignia to wear on our sleeves. We are still proud of them. We had them here at home during the war. They were painted on all the vehicles for

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traffic-control purposes. That is what they are really there for. People think they are a waste of money at times, but they are actually for traffic-control purposes. That is the fundamental thing. On a dark night, an IP, standing in the middle of, we will say, Sto. Marc Eglise, seeing that traffic has to go this way or that way, can spot the insignia on a vehicle and can tell what unit it belongs to. Now, before the troops took off for France, they had to take them all off. They had been trained here in the United States in that, but we were afraid we would let the Germans know when a new division came in the line against them. They would know it anyhow within 24 hours. So General Bradley, after he had a little experience on the ground, said, "The hell with this. We are going to put them back on vehicles, sleeves, and everything else. The men are proud to belong to the First Division or some other division. We are going to put them back on." We lost only a modicum of security by it, but the loss was far more compensated by our facility in getting around and by the pride that we engendered in our units.

QUESTION: General, isn't there a pretty good comparison between the attitude in this country today toward economic and industrial planning for war and the attitude in 1915 toward strategic planning? To illustrate what I mean: The war has been over now almost four years, and apparently no effective results have been obtained toward economic planning. The National Security Resources Board, which presumably would make such plans, apparently is restricted by lack of authority, as we understand it. There has been discussion as to whether it has authority to operate or whether it is purely advisory to the President. Of course, I realize it is not a strictly military problem to make any such plan, but it is very important to us that it be done. Would you please comment on that?

GENERAL COLLINS: We are certainly far ahead of what was the case in 1914. In the event of war, I hope we will be ahead of the conditions that existed when we entered the past war.

We had a pretty good industrial mobilization plan, as a matter of fact, when this last war started, but the President did not know too much about it, and he was a little skeptical about the military. So he extemporized; he tried this, that, and the other thing, and ultimately came back pretty much to what the Army Industrial Mobilization Plan was, as a matter of actual fact.

Now, we are getting back, perhaps, to that same sort of condition I am not so sure. I think we are better than that now. But that stems from that same fear of the military, the fear that the military are going to try to take over the running of industry, that we are going to try to clamp controls on the civilian economy.

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This is nothing new. We had it in the interim between wars. A namesake of mine from Mississippi was then on the House Military Affairs Committee. He always claimed that he was responsible for the mechanization of the Army, that the dumb, old-fashioned officers of the Army would not have anything to do with mechanization, that they all wanted to have horses. There were a few of them like that, but that was by no means the general condition. He made a great to-do about that, but, at the same time, he opposed every move we made toward implementing the Industrial Mobilization Plan. He fought the establishment of procurement districts, for example. He fought the educational orders, and the reason he gave was that he did not want the military to take over control of American industry.

If there is any fear today which hurts the development of industrial mobilization planning, it is that same fear, I believe. So the corrective measure we would have to take again, it would seem to me, would be an educational one.

That is being done with industry. Industry itself does not fear it. I have attended a good many of the Army-Industry Day meetings, at which we discuss these problems with the leaders of industry. I recently came back from Los Angeles, from a meeting of the American Ordnance Association, where, again, these problems were discussed with the leaders of industry. That is the way to do it. They know we are not trying to take over their industries. It will be those men who will help us break down the resistance.

We cannot do it alone, don't you see? We must have the public take the lead in it.

QUESTIONER: May I extend my question just a little? What I was getting at particularly is this: Apparently there is no vocal segment of public opinion in the country today which is disturbed because we do not now have an economic mobilization plan. It seems to me that there might be some segment of opinion here that would be vocal enough to bring to the attention of the public that nothing is really being accomplished.

GENERAL COLLINS: Again, I think, that goes back to the National Security Resources Board. Unfortunately, we do not have a chairman of that board now. We hope that one will be appointed or confirmed, one or the other, before many months go by. If that is done, then we will have an agency that is ready to go ahead on this thing. Without that agency being fully implemented, it is going to be a very difficult thing to get public opinion under way.

QUESTION: General, public opinion is greatly influenced by the press. It would appear that the press is interested in sensationalism

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in selling its product. I think of a very recent example: A column and a half of sensational reporting in this week's "Time Magazine" were devoted to a captain at Quonset Air Station, where, I am sure, many acts favorable to the Armed Services have happened this past week about which no comment has been made. Do you find you get a square deal in reporting by the press?

GENERAL COLLINS: By and large, yes; but we cannot get away from the sensational story.

I am glad you asked that question. It gives me a chance for one final word here.

We will get good public opinion in the Armed Forces when we do a top-notch job, not until then. Every time we fail to do a top-notch job we are criticized. The press will always seize upon those examples that stick out, the things that are wrong. They make news. People expect us to do a good job, and when we do a good job, that is not news. But sell nylon stockings at the wrong moment or beat your wife in public, and so on, and you get a bad reaction. The answer is that we must be exceedingly careful to do a good job and then not worry too much about the individual cases such as you mentioned that come up. I don't think they have too much effect, unless they are cumulative.

We had a terrible condition in Europe. We did something about it. Without in any sense trying to detract from General Clay's magnificent job in Europe, I will say that a large share of the change in the tone of the troops over there can be attributed to General Huebner--the man the Department of the Army sent over as General Clay's Chief of Staff, the man who actually runs the troops for him. General Huebner is an exceedingly able troop commander, a tough disciplinarian, an ex-soldier himself, a man who rose from the ranks to become a lieutenant general in the Army. He knows men and knows how to lead them. He did marvelously well in two wars, and he still has a hold on them. He put discipline into the European Theater, and with that discipline came a complete change in the approach of the newspapermen there to the Army and of the public here at home.

Now, when a big MP goes berserk and knocks over eight Russians, the public doesn't worry about it. If they had been Frenchmen, the public might be more concerned. But there are fewer of those incidents; and since there are fewer of them, when they do occur, the public says, "Sure you are going to have a fellow do that every now and then."

I wouldn't worry about those individual cases. If we do a top-notch job, we are going to have good public relations. If we don't do a top-notch job, we ought to be beaten on the heads.

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COLONEL BABCOCK: I know you could keep the General here for the rest of the morning, but, unfortunately, he has other duties to attend to, as he has mentioned.

General Vandeman.

GENERAL VANDEMAN: General Collins, first I would like to explain our civilian attendance. According to our new charter, we are to educate, all through the regular course, civilians from government agencies such as the Departments of Commerce and State. Next year we will have six men from government agencies added to our class for the regular instruction, the same as in the National War College.

GENERAL COLLINS: Grand.. I think that is a great step forward. I would like to add one further suggestion for your thought. Two years ago I tried to get a change in the program of the National War College. You might think of it here in this College. Perhaps you can do it. For some reason, they could not do it over there.

I suggested that they get in each year five men, if that is all they can take care of, who are not in government at all, but five men from industry--dele, upcoming young men, who, 10 years from now, are going to be the fellows whom the President will pick from for the various boards, commissions, ambassadorships, and so on. Just think what could be done in 10 years. There would be 50 men at the end of that time who will have been subjected to this course at the National War College, where not military problems alone are discussed, but where military, political, and economic problems are discussed.

I still hope some day they will do something about it. Maybe it would be easier for you here in the Industrial College to do it. I am sure industry would give those men to you. They would be young fellows who possibly have not been heard of yet, but they will be heard of 10 years from now.

GENERAL VANDEMAN: I am sure industry would cooperate. In fact, industry has approached us on that. It is a question of facilities. When we can get the facilities, we will be able to handle them.

General Collins, I want to thank you very much for a very interesting discussion. You hit the jack pot, but that is exactly what we expected of you.

GENERAL COLLINS: Thank you.

(16 July 1949--450)S/mg

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